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Sarah Reamon
Grand Valley State University

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MANAGING VOLUNTEERS: RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

SARAH REAMON
Grand Valley State University

Abstract

This paper examines the nonprofit management dilemma of volunteer recruitment and retention. It argues that a focus on building relationships between new volunteers, the volunteer manager, and the volunteer community is the best way to navigate the psychological contract (PC). Drawing from Rousseau's (1989) concept of a PC as "an individual's beliefs regarding the terms and conditions of a reciprocal exchange agreement" (p. 123), when a volunteer signs on to work with an organization they form an understanding on what promises, conditions and agreements have been made (Farmer & Fedor, 1999). Through considering the group socialization model developed by Levine & Moreland (1994), this paper investigates how the various phases of volunteer engagement require different strategies for fulfilling the PC and which relationship building activities are most important to each phase. This paper contends that recruitment and retention are inextricably linked to one another and should both be considered through all the various phases of the socialization process.

Keywords: volunteers, volunteer recruitment, volunteer retention, psychological contract

INTRODUCTION

Volunteer recruitment and retention is a critical management function in the nonprofit sector. There is a whole profession built around volunteer management. Building an effective volunteer program within an organization is an important, complex and perpetual undertaking. This paper examines the dual importance of relationship building and consideration of the psychological contract with respect to volunteer recruitment and retention.

These aspects will be considered in the context of the process of socialization. For the sake of this paper, volunteers will refer to what Brudney (2010) calls "service volunteers," those who are donating time to serve or help in a variety of mission-related capacities directly connected to programs, services and activities. The volunteer manager, as used in this paper, will refer to the person in the organization who most directly oversees the volunteer community. One of the management problems surrounding volunteer programs is balancing the activities of recruitment and retention. These dual objectives can be attended to simultaneously. Success in each is more likely when they are considered together. There has been a tendency for volunteer management to focus heavily on recruitment, but there is ample evidence to show that efforts at retention will not only minimize the need for recruitment but will also organically grow the pool of potential recruits.

In this paper Moreland and Levine's group socialization model is examined within the realm of volunteer recruitment and retention. The volunteer manager's role as a facilitator of the process of social influence is also discussed. In each phase, consideration is given to how building relationships is an essential ingredient in a volunteer program. A second issue, which must be connected to the matter of recruitment and retention, is selectivity of volunteers. Selectivity refers to maintaining standards as to who is accepted into the volunteer program and how they are expected to behave and perform in order to remain part of the volunteer program. An effective volunteer program must make it hard to sign on but easy to part ways.

Literature Review

Although building a volunteer program is not the focus of this paper, there are significant implications for recruiting and retaining volunteers connected to the program design and so it is worth visiting the topic briefly.

> Effective volunteer programs do not happen
> spontaneously, and they do not happen by accident.
> A well-designed program is the result of many

> factors, and the Volunteer Program Manager must make many decisions before any volunteers are sought for the program. (McCurley & Lynch, 1996, p. 19)

Starting a Volunteer Program

Ellis (1996) explains that starting a volunteer program involves three steps. The first step in the volunteer recruitment process is "know why your organization wants volunteers" and the second is "designing valuable volunteer assignments" (p. 5). One of the many factors to be considered is the rationale behind building the program. The third step is getting staff and stakeholders within the program and determining how volunteers will be utilized.

Brudney (2010) identifies a number of benefits that organizations derive from volunteer programs and that drive the decision to develop such programs including: harnessed energy that empowers their ability to commit and care for clients; increased knowledge of and closer ties to the citizens in their community; ability to reach new populations previously inaccessible; widened pool of specialized, professional skills available; and increased fundraising capacity. He emphasizes the importance of identifying the purpose for utilizing volunteers and developing organizational policies to guide the process of building a volunteer program.

Another factor that is important to consider is how to involve the staff, board and other stakeholders in developing the program.

> The sharing of needs, perspectives, and information among agency leadership, employees, and prospective volunteers that ensues plays a pivotal role in determining how the volunteer program might be most effectively designed, organized, and managed to further attainment of agency goals. (Brudney, 2010, p. 758)

Involving the staff is especially important as they will be working closely with the volunteers and may harbor fears that the organization is going to replace their position and role with volunteer personnel. If the staff harbors

feelings of opposition and resentment towards the volunteer program it will permeate the organizational culture and create a climate where the volunteers feel unwelcome (McCurley & Lynch, 1996). Conversely, if the staff, board, and leadership are supportive and actively involved then it can lead to increased trust, greater willingness to sacrifice, mutual support, and better communication all of which can lead the volunteer to feel accepted and appreciated (McCurley & Lynch, 1996). All of these factors will contribute to the organization's ability to retain volunteers.

More factors to consider are what the organization hopes to achieve through using volunteers and how specifically they will be utilized. Brudney (2010) asserts that an explicit statement of goals allows an organization to define the types of volunteer positions needed, the number of individuals required, and a description of concrete objectives for the program to assist with future evaluation. The aspects he identifies as important to consider include: definition of volunteer; screening procedures; orientation and training; probationary period; assignment of volunteers; performance evaluation; benefits of service (value exchange); length or term of service; grievance procedures; reimbursement policies; use of agency equipment and facilities; confidentiality requirements; disciplinary procedures; and any record-keeping requirements. When these details are thought through and clearly communicated, an organization is better able to attract volunteers who are a good fit, which will aid in retention. This strategy helps retention because the expectations formed by the volunteer when they first commit to serving are a closer match to the reality they later experience. Building a volunteer program with intentionality and clarity provides a solid foundation for launching into recruitment and retention.

The Inextricable Link of Recruitment and Retention

Volunteer managers have a tendency to focus their time and attention on recruitment only to be stuck in a holding pattern of perpetual recruitment in part due to increasing competition among nonprofits but mostly due to high turnover rates within the organization, which creates an

urgent and ongoing need for new bodies to fill the positions (Brudney & Meijs, 2012).

Brudney and Meijs (2012) expound on this in their characterization of volunteer energy as a natural resource which is a "human-made, renewable/recyclable resource that can be grown." In their conceptualization, if organizations use the volunteer energy responsibly and positively then it will be sustainable but if it is used inappropriately then the volunteer energy risks exhaustion and depletion.

When an organization exploits this resource through overuse or neglect there is a high risk of drop-out or burn-out, which not only leads to being in perpetual recruitment mode but also contributes to the depletion of the total pool of volunteer energy. They advocate a regenerative approach to volunteer development that is community-centered and views the volunteer as a recyclable resource that should be harnessed to encourage prolonged interaction (with the organization) and create life-time value (for the greater community) by offering flexibility of opportunity, negotiating roles to maximize value exchange, and calling attention to accomplishments of both the organization and the volunteer.

Value Exchange and the Psychological Contract

When people think of volunteer work they tend to evaluate it in terms of sacrifice and reward (Musick & Wilson, 2012). The sacrifice part is easier to understand. Volunteers are using their time, energy and, at times, knowledge for the benefit of the organization with no monetary compensation. However, it is acknowledged and accepted that there are rewards associated with volunteering; nonprofit organizations engage in exchange relationships with volunteers (Gainer, 2010). In the market space of volunteer relationships, value exchange occurs through identifying the rewards of volunteering in efforts to recruit potential volunteers and also in producing ongoing rewards within current volunteer relationships in efforts to retain (Gainer, 2010). Barker (1993) identifies altruistic, instrumental, and obligatory reasons to be the three main driving forces motivating people to volunteer. For example,

a person may learn that there are a growing number of homeless individuals in their city and feel a sense of compassion and so they decide to volunteer at the local soup kitchen (altruistic). Another instance, a pre-law college student may volunteer with a community legal center in order to gain experience to put on a résumé (instrumental). Alternatively, a person holding certain religious beliefs may be instilled with a sense of duty towards serving others and volunteer as a tutor at a learning center on a regular basis (obligatory). Understanding why a particular volunteer has chosen to serve can help the volunteer manager use appropriate rewards to encourage the volunteer which will raise their satisfaction level and lead to higher rates of retention.

The sacrifice and rewards involved in a particular volunteer relationship are part of a larger concept central to volunteer management, the psychological contract. Drawing from Rousseau's (1989) idea of a psychological contract as "an individual's beliefs regarding the terms and conditions of a reciprocal exchange agreement between that focal person and another party" (p. 123), when a volunteer signs on to work with an organization they bring their own individual perspective on what promises, conditions and agreements have been made (Farmer & Fedor, 1999). Each party has their own idea and expectation of their reciprocal obligations based on their own intention, interpretation and perception of implicit and explicit messages. In the context of volunteer relationships, when there are perceived breaches in the psychological contract (which can occur at any stage in the relationship) there can be consequences such as dissatisfaction, lowered level of participation in the organization, or actual withdrawal from the organization (Farmer & Fedor, 1999). Fulfillment of the psychological contract can occur through organizational efforts to express recognition of the volunteer and show that they value the relationship and care about the well-being of the volunteer (Farmer & Fedor, 1999). In one study conducted by Farmer and Fedor (1999), a total of 451 volunteers were surveyed in order to examine the psychological contract. Volunteers who reported their expectations were met and they perceived organizational support and care were shown to have

increased attendance and intentions to remain. This study found that organizations were perceived to be better at meeting expectations of ongoing support than they are at matching expectations that volunteers had upon entry. However, the study also showed that when volunteers sense the organization cares about their general well-being they are more willing to overlook particular unmet expectations.

Another study, which provides a more comprehensive understanding of volunteer expectations, was done by Vantilborgh, Bidee, Pepermans, Willems, Huybrechts and Jegers (2012). In-depth interviews with 25 volunteers from large, well-established nonprofit organizations were conducted to determine examples of situations where perceived obligations were either fulfilled or breached. The responses were then used to construct separate lists of perceived organizational obligations and volunteer obligations. Based on the interviews, several perceived organizational obligations were identified including the ability to work somewhat autonomously; receiving some form of benefits (free or discounted activities or tangible inducements); consistent communication (consulting and informing); facilitating the volunteers' contribution to the mission; providing opportunities for social interaction; allowing volunteers to give input in areas of management and governance; recognition of contributions and effort; and adequate organizational support and training to equip the volunteer. As far as what the volunteers perceived to be their own obligation, the list includes being willing to take on new responsibilities or tasks, contributing to the mission, demonstrating a credible commitment to the cause, contributing to the organization and the other volunteers in areas unrelated to the mission, working at least the minimum hours expected and being there when expected, providing feedback and taking initiative to improve organizational practices, and satisfying the general role requirements.

When an organization is able to help volunteers connect their role to overall impact it will contribute to feelings of fulfillment and satisfaction. Furthermore, when a volunteer manager is able to understand the psychological contract in the eyes of the volunteer they are able to more

accurately identify the motivations and values of the volunteer and navigate the relationship more successfully. A successful volunteer program considers how to meet both the needs of the organization and the needs of the volunteers (Brudney, 2010).

Application of Group Socialization Model

Levine and Moreland (1994) have identified five stages within the group socialization model, which include investigation, socialization, maintenance, resocialization, and remembrance. The model is separated by four role transitions (entry, acceptance, divergence, and exit) and is intended to explain the passage of individuals through groups and illustrate the ways that both the group and the individual change over time. This section argues that the group socialization model can be applied to the volunteer management process. Therefore, when a volunteer program is successful with building relationships then it can be viewed as a community.

Investigation. The first stage of the model refers to investigation, and when applied to volunteer management, refers to the recruiting, screening, and interviewing activities. This is also referred to as the nomination phase (Haski-Leventhal & Bargal, 2008), and is comparable to the 'anticipatory socialization' stage (Louis, 1980) or the 'attraction stage' (Schneider, 1987). At some point, the prospective volunteer first hears about the organization and is interested and attracted to it, based on their understanding of the image and character of it (Haski-Leventhal & Bargal, 2008). For many organizations, the prospective volunteer hears about them through a current stakeholder. This stakeholder is able to connect the prospective volunteer to a contact at the organization who will then initiate dialogue. Other times this interest is piqued because of the organization's public image or from a prospective volunteer taking initiation to research which organizations are working for a cause they are passionate about or with a target population they are interested in serving (Haski-Leventhal & Bargal, 2008). In that case, the prospective volunteer would

initiate first contact with the organization. In either case, the organization and the prospect must mutually decide whether to make a commitment; this involves a process of screening and interviewing.

Brudney (2010) explains that screening should involve identifying the relevant skills, abilities and interests of the prospect, as well as checking references and performing background checks (commensurate with the vulnerability of the client population). He explains interviews will help ensure a suitable fit between the prospect and the organization. Ambiguity is prevalent in this phase due to all the unknown factors involved and this produces an emotional cocktail of excitement mixed with fears and fantasies (Haski-Leventhal & Bargal, 2008). Both parties should ask questions during this time and the job description should be discussed. This is important because it is during this time that the psychological contract is formed and it is based on perceptions and messages received.

There will always be some difference between what the volunteer perceives and how things play out in reality, but this can be minimized through the organization's effort to be upfront and detailed in communicating the commitment. McCurley and Lynch (1996) address the importance of creating volunteer job descriptions including job title and purpose, potential exchange value, necessary qualifications, time commitment (frequency and length), responsibilities and activities involved, accountability structure and evaluation methods. Anheier (2005) explains the importance in matching volunteer interests and talents to organizational needs not only for recruitment purposes but also retention. During this time, the potential volunteer will ascertain whether this is a good fit and this position will contribute to the satisfaction of the rewards sought from the value exchange (whether altruistic, instrumental or obligatory) and the volunteer manager will decide if the prospect is a good fit for the position. If both parties decide it is a good fit then the role transition of entry occurs and the volunteer moves on to orientation and training (Levine & Moreland, 1994).

There are a couple of practical actions that a volunteer manager can attend to during this phase. The first

is selectivity. It may be tempting for an organization to accept any help that is offered, after all nonprofits are resource dependent and volunteers could be viewed as free labor. Though seemingly correct, this logic is based on false assumptions and understandings. A volunteer program is not the equivalent of free labor, if the program is to be effective it will require some expenditure in the areas of orientation, training, promotion, and materials (Brudney, 2010). At the front end the organization must pour a lot into the volunteer in order to bring them to a point where they will be capable and effective. Cost-effectiveness is achieved when a volunteer can amplify the level and quality of services offered to the public, when this occurs then the volunteer acts as an expansion of resources (Brudney, 2010). In order to get to that point, the organization must first devote time, energy and resources in growing the volunteer. Therefore it will serve the organization well to be selective in choosing volunteers who have the skills and abilities necessary to fulfill the role requirements and to conduct proper vetting in advance in order to uncover any conflicts or contradictions. Valuable resources would be wasted unnecessarily if nonprofits indiscriminately signed on volunteers and poured resources into them only to find out later that they are unable or unwilling to fulfill their role in serving. This is a real danger because people experience a euphoric feeling about signing on to do good but at this juncture that feeling is based on a romantic idealism of how things will be and coupled with both a low commitment and sense of loyalty to the organization (Haski-Leventhal & Bargal, 2008).

Practicing selectivity, at the investigation phase, translates to being open to rejecting potential volunteers. Rejections in this phase can occur for a number of reasons including not having a suitable position, realizing the volunteer has expectations that cannot be met, incongruent philosophies between the volunteer and the organization, refusal to agree to requirements such as background check or training commitments, or even just a "gut" feeling based on the interview (McCurley & Lynch, 1996). Depending on the reason for rejection, there is an option to refer the volunteer to another position within the organization, perhaps one that

is not as closely related to the mission but will still allow the interested party to connect with the organization. Another option, especially useful in times of incongruent philosophies, is to refer the potential volunteer to another organization that would appear to be a better fit (McCurley & Lynch, 1996; Ellis, 1996).

The second practical action the volunteer manager should take during this phase is to show a genuine interest in the potential volunteer's life and to be willing to share something of their own personal story. Not only will this facilitate a better understanding of the person and aid in the decision to bring them on as a volunteer, it will also start the foundation for future relationship building and will engage the volunteer on a personal level, not just an instrumental level. In conclusion, volunteer recruitment is better connected to the investigation stage in the group socialization model. Next, the socialization phase will be applied to volunteer management.

Socialization. The next phase in the group socialization model is socialization which can be applied to volunteer management through volunteer orientations. During orientation the organization (including other volunteers) attempts to assimilate the new recruit. In addition, the volunteers gain a deeper understanding of the overall mission, values and strategy of the organization, the purpose of the volunteer program, the constitution of volunteer-staff relationships, as well as applicable rules and procedures (Brudney, 2010). During this time the volunteer chooses to identify with the organization and signals agreement with important core requirements. The organization and the other volunteers signal a welcome and an invitation to be part of the group. When this happens it signifies the transitional role of acceptance (Levine & Moreland, 1994). This is what volunteer managers should be looking for.

A part of the socialization phase includes what Haski-Leventhal and Bargal (2008) refer to as the newcomer phase which is generally the first couple of months of actual service and involvement. They explain that the volunteer is still viewed as 'new' by the rest of the volunteer community and by the clients. New volunteers are able to engage in

their role in a limited capacity and are trying to gain an understanding of how things work and how best to fulfill their role. Because the volunteer is yet unable to produce much quality of service, they often focus on quantity, doing as much as they can or helping as many as they can. Often, the new volunteer does not feel they are contributing much or that they are needed which can cause frustration. The relationship gaps that exist with the clients and other volunteers leave the new volunteer as more of an outsider which can cause emotional strain.

At a time of low satisfaction and high frustration, the only thing that keeps the new volunteer coming back is their sense of obligation to fulfill the commitment they made. Usually within the first weeks of volunteering some type of "meaningful event" takes place which leads to the new volunteer feeling more competent, able, needed and fulfilled (Haski-Leventhal & Bargal, 2008). This occurrence plays a critical part in enabling the role transition of entry in which there is an increased commitment to the organization and to the volunteer's role. This contributes to the volunteer's attitude shifting from 'sticking it out' to 'staying the course'. It may be a small distinction, but it is also an important one in which the volunteer is not showing up out of guilt or obligation but rather to achieve the impact they initially desired.

It is also possible that the volunteer will not have a strong sense of obligation to their commitment. As mentioned previously, the socialization phase can be wrought with frustration and disconnectedness. The volunteer may choose the role transition of exit and leave before they have an opportunity to experience fulfillment. This is a danger and unfortunately, if not protected against, it can lead to high turnover rates and loss of potentially quality volunteers. It can also create trust and acceptance issues between clients and future volunteers, leading the clients to lengthen the "try-out" time, because they know there is a risk that new volunteers will not be around long so why risk getting attached (Haski-Leventhal & Bargal, 2008).

Relationship building during the socialization phase should focus on helping the new volunteer develop relationships with the volunteer community. Some

organizations run their programs according to the calendar year and the majority of their new recruits begin around the same time. The relationships with other volunteers can aid in relationship development as these new recruits can go through training together. Also, these organizations could schedule a leaders' retreat before the program year kicks off which can include team building activities, next level training sessions (not intended to substitute new volunteer training), discussion times (allowing the new volunteer to gain understanding on the program and the returning volunteer an opportunity to provide input), and a gift of appreciation (a book addressing a topic relevant to the organization's cause can serve a double purpose).

Not every organization is set up to be able to hold a retreat as described above, however there are other ways the volunteer manager can help integrate new volunteers into the larger volunteer community and begin building relationships. New volunteers could be paired up with veteran volunteers for an extended period of time. This can be especially successful if the veteran volunteer understands the process of socialization and the purpose and importance of the pairing.

At the very least, the volunteer manager should make a point to introduce the new volunteer and encourage the community to make them feel welcome. The manager should pay special attention to the new volunteer and make a point to call them by name and remember some personal details about their life. Making concerted efforts to connect with the volunteer at this point will help prevent feelings of isolation as well as alert the manager to any frustrations or potential breach while it is still early enough to do something. Over time, as the volunteer carries out their commitment they form relationships and bonds which help them assimilate and simultaneously gain experience and a better understanding of the program and their role.

Maintenance. The maintenance phase in the group socialization model involves maximization of contributions within an organization, which is also referred to as the emotional involvement phase (Haski-Leventhal & Bargal, 2008). When applied to volunteer management, the

maintenance phase is the period when the volunteer begins to serve with more skill and confidence. This phase is marked by deep emotional involvement (with clients and other volunteers), specific circumstance dilemmas (namely boundary definition), 'sober idealism,' high commitment level, surprise at discovery of unanticipated costs of volunteering, and a change in status where the volunteer transitions out of being viewed as 'new' (Haski-Leventhal & Bargal, 2008). During this time, their role is negotiated in an attempt to maximize contribution to the organization while continuing to be fulfilled by their service (Levine & Moreland, 1994). The volunteer must find their niche within the volunteer community of the organization. This is when the reality of the commitment is realized and the recruit's role within the community becomes stabilized and specialized. This is also when the psychological contract is put to the test.

The relationships that the volunteer has built with other volunteers are particularly helpful during the maintenance phase. Training can only cover so much but as the volunteer has prolonged involvement they will come across specific situations which will provoke new questions about what is appropriate and how to deal with problems (Haski-Leventhal & Bargal, 2008). During this phase it is important for volunteers to be able to discuss their experiences and provide support and advice for each other. One way the manager can facilitate this is to hold regular meetings that allow for discussion and sharing and can also serve the dual purpose of communicating any pertinent information about the organization, clients, program and upcoming events. The frequency and timing of this type of meeting would be dependent on the structure of the program or service the volunteers are involved in.

Also during the maintenance phase, it is important for the manager to show appreciation for the involvement and contribution of the volunteer. This can be done with a card, through public recognition, a certificate, or by treating them to coffee. An important element in this is to acknowledge specifically what the volunteer is doing well.

Ideally, the volunteer manager would have some sort of informal evaluation or check-in at this time even if

the normal evaluation process is done on a yearly basis. During the first year it is important to provide feedback and give opportunity for the volunteer to assess their experience as well. In the best case scenario, everything is going well but this provided an opportunity to show the volunteer that the manager cares. Providing an evaluation at this point allows the manager to address any problem behavior or unsatisfactory performance concerns before the behavior becomes habitual.

It is also possible that during the maintenance phase, the manager will discover that the volunteer is struggling to balance their volunteer commitment with other responsibilities in their life or that the experience is not matching what they had expected it to be (psychological contract breach). This would allow the manager to determine if there is a way to renegotiate the volunteer's involvement so that it is still beneficial to the organization but is also enjoyable and fulfilling for the volunteer.

If this role negotiation is successful then the commitment of the recruit to the organization and to the volunteer community is strengthened and vice versa but if it fails, the volunteer becomes a marginal member of the community and the role transition of divergence occurs (Levine & Moreland, 1994). If this occurs there is a danger that the volunteer will decide to end or reduce their commitment to the organization. This could mean that the organization is left short-handed or worse that the volunteer will stay out of obligation which can lead to decreased quality in their service and to frustrated relationships in the volunteer community. Ultimately, the maintenance phase is a time for making tune-ups and adjustments to maximize the value exchange and facilitate retention.

Resocialization. The third stage of the group socialization model is resocialization. When this stage is applied to volunteer management, the volunteer has made a recommitment to the organization. Brudney (2010) suggests increasing responsibility levels over time, seeking input for decision making and problem solving, allowing opportunities for training and learning, allowing for two-way feedback and evaluation, and offering service as a reference

or giving a recommendation are ways that recommitment can occur.

> The goal ought to be to ascertain the degree to which the needs and expectations of the volunteer and the agency are met, so that job assignments can be continued, amended, or redefined as necessary. (Brudney, 2010, p. 784)

Haski-Leventhal and Bargal (2008) referred to this as the established volunteering phase and observed the characteristics to include deeper relationships with fewer clients, relatively few new contacts, waning level of commitment, 'detached concern', understanding of the various costs of volunteer activity, attitudes reflecting realism and/or cynicism, and being viewed as a central and influential group member.

At this point the relationship between the manager and the volunteer is well established. There is also a level of trust that has been built. The manager may reward the volunteer by giving them increased autonomy in their service. Another reward option is to allow the volunteer to use their insight and experience to inform decision-making and strategic planning. The manager can use this opportunity to recognize the abilities and competencies the volunteer has built. A great way to do this is during evaluation, which should be done, at a minimum, on a yearly basis. The manager can appraise the past performance and express their intention and desire to allow the volunteer to take on more responsibility. The volunteer should be allowed to offer their own ideas on what this will look like and what new role they might take on. Providing opportunities for more in-depth development and training through a conference or other engagement is appropriate at this time as well.

A volunteer manager that focuses on relationship building is more likely to be sensitive to a volunteer that is experiencing frustration or lack of engagement in their role. Perhaps the volunteer's expectations of how the experience would be did not match the reality of the situation. It is also possible that over time the volunteer's expectations changed. Brudney (2010) observes that volunteers often come due to altruistic motivations but tend to stay because

of the rewards experienced such as opportunities for socializing and enjoyment of the tasks with which they are assigned. Haski-Leventhal and Bargal (2008) explain this further by stating that "people may start to volunteer for certain reasons, such as a desire to help others, and continue to do so for different reasons, such as a strong affiliation with a volunteer peer group" (p. 70).

Once a lack of engagement is sensed, the volunteer manager can ensure that the volunteer is resocialized to the organization. In order to continue inspiring volunteers it is important to understand their changing motivational factors.

If the effort to redefine the role is successful the volunteer will converge and assimilate into the group with a strengthened commitment to service (Levine & Moreland, 1994). Another possibility transition is self-renewal which occurs through taking up new roles, reflecting on experiences and achievements, or taking a restorative break, all of which can help volunteers recover from fatigue and restore their energy and desire to serve (Haski-Leventhal & Bargal, 2008). If the volunteer decides to take a break, the manager should stay in contact and check-in on them during their away time. This will allow for easier re-entry and will send the message that the manager cares about the volunteer as a person and not just because of what they do for the organization. This is an important distinction in being able to protect volunteer energy and keep it as a renewable, sustainable resource. This should be done even if there is no guarantee that the volunteer will return to that specific organization.

If there is a failure to renegotiate role then the volunteer is likely to exit. This decision is not made lightly and can be emotional for everyone involved since the volunteer may have been somewhat of a permanent fixture after years of involvement. A danger for the volunteer manager is the possibility of a domino effect where "volunteers who see their close friends leave think it might be time for them to stop volunteering as well" (Haski-Leventhal & Bargal, 2008, p. 93).

Remembrance. The last stage in the group socialization model is remembrance, which is also referred to as

retirement (Haski-Leventhal & Bargal, 2008). Remembrance, as applied to volunteer management, refers to the time when the volunteer and the organization decide to part ways (Levine & Moreland, 1994). There are a number of circumstances under which this can occur, and not all situations signify failure. Haski-Leventhal and Bargal (2008) observe that the remembrance phase is marked with closure rituals, mutual appreciation, detachment difficulties, sadness mixed with relief, regaining some level of idealism, putting the volunteer experience into perspective, and a strengthened commitment and desire to volunteering and contributing to social change. The volunteer manager should honor the time the volunteer served and provide some level of reflection and appreciation for their contribution. When a volunteer expresses that they no longer wish to serve the manager should make it relatively easy and painless for them to exit, even if there is a verbal commitment that they would be around for a longer time. Keeping a volunteer around after they have made a decision to leave can lead to a loss of accountability and can also negatively affect the tone of the volunteer community. It is better to end on a positive and celebratory note. This will aid in protecting the natural resource of volunteer energy, which is the ethical and responsible choice, even if that particular source will never provide for that specific organization. By ending on a positive note, the volunteer could serve the organization in other ways by becoming a future donor, speaking highly of the organization to others, and setting a positive example for the remaining volunteers in how to exit on a high note.

These various phases require different strategies in order for the volunteer manager to successfully navigate the psychological contract, minimize frustrations, ensure higher quality outputs, and reduce the turnover rate of volunteers. If volunteer managers shift their focus to retaining their current volunteers the needs for recruitment would be lower. Retaining efforts pay off in more than just the obvious result of keeping positions filled. When volunteers are fulfilled and excited they are going to contribute at a greater level and with a better quality of care that will reflect positively on the organization. The volunteers who find enjoyment in

their service will act as recruiters in sharing with their friends and acquaintances and inviting those who they believe would be interested and a good fit. Energetic and enthusiastic volunteers are the best recruiting program for which a manager could wish. These volunteers know the culture and commitment of the organization's volunteer program better than anyone and can be useful in locating others who would be a good fit for serving. This type of recruiting is not only cost-effective; it also eliminates part of the risk of the unknown in cold recruiting and eliminates some of the hurdles that keep potential volunteers from making a commitment. By properly maintaining the relationships with existing volunteers, the volunteer manager is able to harness volunteer energy into a powerful recruiting force.

Another important aspect to think through is how the budget and staff job descriptions will reflect the volunteer program. In this paper, I argue that building relationships is essential for retaining leaders and building a quality program. The budget should provide not only for volunteer training and screening but also for ongoing needs for continued relationship building. The volunteer manager (which is any staff overseeing volunteer groups, there may be more than one per organization) should receive a contacting budget and an appreciation budget. Staff job descriptions should include specific requirements involving making contact with volunteers, showing appreciation to them, and providing continuing training for them.

CONCLUSION

The objectives of volunteer recruitment and retaining are inextricably linked. A volunteer manager must consider the reciprocal impact of the one on the other in order to successfully build and maintain a volunteer community. Volunteers have a complex and multitudinous assortment of motivations and expectations that can cause difficulties in facilitating long term commitments. The most important activity a volunteer manager can attend to in attempting to retain volunteers is building relationships. The relationships built should be between the volunteer and the

volunteer manager as well as between the volunteer and the volunteer community. An individual who feels genuinely cared for and a sense of belonging is willing to overlook other unmet expectations and experience higher levels of commitment and loyalty.

Through these relationships, the volunteer manager will be able to better understand the expectations and changing motivations of the volunteer. This will allow the manager to better engage the volunteer and offer appropriate incentives and tokens of appreciation adapted to maximally satisfy and sustain the volunteer. Understanding the socialization process a new volunteer moves is crucial for a manager in understanding how the psychological contract changes over time and possible breaches that pose a risk in each phase. By exercising selectivity the volunteer manager is able to better fulfill their fiduciary responsibility, protect the quality of programs, services, and activities, guard the volunteer community culture, contribute to risk management activities, and create a safer and more positive overall environment. The ability to maintain this type of environment will then strengthen the positive experience of volunteers which again increases their commitment level and quality of service. In this way the volunteer manager is able to create a positive cycle where careful recruiting and care-full retaining efforts reinforce one another and propel the volunteer program into a healthy and fruitful endeavor.

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Sarah Reamon completed her Master's in Public Administration with a concentration in Nonprofit Management and Leadership from Grand Valley State University in May 2015. Sarah began her career as the Junior High Facilitator at Calvary Church in Grand Rapids, MI where she worked extensively with managing volunteers. After five years, she pursued an opportunity to go to Kyiv, Ukraine and work with an NGO focused on serving "street kids." Upon returning, Sarah spent several years in the for-profit sector before deciding to return to pursue a degree that would prepare her for work in public service. She volunteers on multiple committees for SowHope, a Grand Rapids based organization serving impoverished women throughout the world. She is working as a Reader/Evaluator with Measurement Incorporated where she scores essays for standardized tests.