Good Processes Get Results: Increasing Volunteer Engagement through Volunteer Management

Presented at the Massachusetts Conference on Service and Volunteering
June 12, 2017

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Learning Objectives

● Identify strengths and weaknesses of your organization’s volunteer engagement processes.

● Create an action plan to address areas for improvement.

● Take it back and apply what you’ve learned to improve volunteer engagement.
History of Boston Partners in Education: How did we get here?

Started in 1966 as School Volunteers for Boston - goal was to support students and teachers in the Boston Public Schools by putting volunteers into schools during school day.
History of Boston Partners

- Over the years, programs and areas of focus shifted, but core mission remained the same
- Until 2010, used a custom database for volunteer management - out of date, clunky to use, limited information available.
- Upgraded to SalesForce in 2010
Case Study

Now that we had a better idea of what was going on in the schools, a new area for improvement emerged - what was going on with the mentors themselves?
Impetus for Change

Issues with:

- Responsiveness
- Engagement
- Retention
- Storytelling
What was in place?

- We had three major programs at the time: two with large numbers of volunteers, one much smaller

- Handful of strong relationships with teachers and volunteers who reached out to Boston Partners

- After initial match, two standard touch points

- Robust matching and confirmation process which included one click buttons for email templates for confirmations and other notifications.
What was in place?
Bringing Staff to the Table

Decided we needed a stronger match support system to provide better customer service but keep it manageable for handling hundreds of people.
Creating a Process

- Decided a manual process would work better for our systems
- Modeled after survey email template system
- Needed time variable reports due to rolling start dates
Process Roll Out and Early Results

- Launched process 15/16 school year
- Saw some benefits immediately, but also noticed kinks to work out
- Success with the process led to ideas for other areas of focus
Early Benefits

- Increased volunteer engagement with Boston Partners
- Better information about ongoing matches
- More stories to tell
- Increased attendance at volunteer engagement events
Taking it to the Next Level - 16/17 year

- Strategically addressed issues identified at end of first year
- Asked for feedback from partners
- Continued to work on new system as year progressed
How Did It All Come Together?

1. Identified the problem we wanted to solve
2. Figured out our strengths - what did we already have?
3. Brought staff to the table
4. Created the system
5. Tried it out
6. Found the holes
7. Tried it again
Resources

What helped Boston Partners create and implement their new process?

- Mass Mentoring Partnership’s Quality Based Mentoring guidelines
- Consultants we were already engaged with in other ways
- Salesforce Nonprofit User Group
- Tech Networks of Boston

What resources would be right for you and your organization?
Individual Reflection

For the next 15 minutes, think about and write down responses to the following questions:

1. What is the current state of your volunteer management system?

2. What do you think needs to be improved?
Triads

For the next 30 minutes, work in groups of 3.

Each person has 5 minutes to present the improvements you think you need to make to your systems.

The other two will then have 5 minutes to give advice on how to effectively make those improvements. As you listen, write down and prioritize the ideas you want to bring back.

Listen for the times to switch roles!
Final Thoughts

Please share one piece of advice from your small group work - what will you take back?
Thank You

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