

Potential Barriers

I don't have time.



Solutions!

Plan Ahead

Enlist support from other staff members

Invest time initially for long term pay off

Ask volunteers to gather research evidence, write reports, collate materials

Potential Barriers

I don't have funding or personnel.



Solutions!

No cost is necessary!

Ask volunteers to gather research evidence, write reports, collate materials.

Potential Barriers

Too many internal politics and pressures



Solutions!

Identify the person that is most often heard and approach them first to gain their support.

Key influencers in the organization will help pave your way to senior decision makers.

Be clear, concise with convincing evidence to be heard over others.

Potential Barriers

Senior management, the Board lack interest in, knowledge about and/or cooperation with my volunteer program.



Solutions!

Demonstrate the value of the volunteer program with a comprehensive bank of clear evidence.

Know your program's return on investment and comparative cost of volunteer contributions per dollar invested in the program.

Involve staff by asking them to give a testimonial about a volunteer they work alongside.

Invite board members and staff to volunteer events

Potential Barriers

I don't have the skills to influence up.



Solutions!

Experts are not necessary!

Gather research

Devise a strategy

Make time to implement your strategy

Identify your barriers

Keep a list of all the reasons why it is important to gain executive support for your volunteer program

Potential Barriers

I'm too low on the "totem pole"/isolated from senior management to make a difference.



Solutions!

Work through your supervisor and other key influencers

Be proactive in getting your voice heard.

Develop relationships to increase your circle of influence

Be creative and use a variety of communication methods

Arm your supervisor with ideas, proposals and evidence relevant to your volunteer program to take into senior management meetings.

Potential Barriers

I don't have enough confidence to approach senior management.



achieving change Together

Solutions!

Confidence comes from knowledge. The more evidence about your program and its value to the organization the more comfortable and confident you will feel promoting the program.


Gain the support of a key influencer in the organization.

Look for an individual outside your organization to mentor and coach you.

Use personal affirmations to build your confidence.

Potential Barriers

I don't have enough evidence about the importance and value of volunteering and volunteer management in my organization.



Solutions!

Assess the impact that the volunteer management staff have on the effectiveness of the volunteer program.

Highlight the services that the organization might not be able to deliver without volunteer support.

Produce a report with volunteer impacts, program outputs and return on investment.

Collect case study information and testimonials from volunteers and staff on the impact volunteers have made and the benefits volunteers have gained.

By Karin Oliveira, Director of Community Builders, United Way of North Central Massachusetts. Used with permission.

Additional Resources:

Leading the Way to Successful Volunteer Involvement

By Betty Stallings, with Susan J. Ellis. Energize, Inc. 2010.

<http://www.bettystallings.com/books/leadingtheway.htm>

Stalking the Elusive Executive: A Dozen Tips for Getting Top Management to Read (and Learn From) Volunteer Management Literature

By Susan J. Ellis, Energize, Inc., 2004

(This is a free e-book, designed originally as an insert to *From the Top Down* referenced below)

<http://www.energizeinc.com/store/5-215-E-1>

From the Top Down: The Executive Role in Successful Volunteer Involvement, 3rd Edition

By Susan J. Ellis. Energize, Inc., 2010.

<http://www.energizeinc.com/store/1-102-E-3>