
Your Volunteers: Training Your Greatest Ministry Asset

Once you have recruited a volunteer – moving them from a come-and-see to a come-and-serve mindset – you'll need to train them.

In the follow-up to '[Your Volunteers: Recruit](#),' Chris Mavity's '[Your Volunteers: Train](#)' addresses three critical components to training: the differences between training and equipping, training for the long term, and the four characteristics of healthy training – but what, exactly, does each mean and entail?

Training v. Equipping: As Mavity puts it, "Training is providing input, in various forms, to influence a person's future actions, attitudes, and behaviors. You'll need to train your volunteers so that they achieve the specific ministry outcomes you desire. Equipping is about providing the resources a person needs to perform the duties associated with the roles and responsibilities for which they have been selected. For example, a custodian needs a vacuum cleaner, a data entry volunteer needs a computer, and a Sunday school teacher needs a classroom and supplies."

Training for the Long Term: There are two types of training: orientation and ongoing training. Orientation training helps your volunteers understand the role, responsibilities, and expected outcomes of the assignment. It also gives your volunteers enough guidance, information and instruction necessary to complete the assignment while helping them gain confidence. Ongoing training is focused on life-skills development by helping your volunteers become a better version of themselves and communicating that you care about them as people – not just in a ministry capacity – and that you will pour into them to make them better in all aspects of their lives.

Four Characteristics of Healthy Training: As you develop your training, keep it ...

... simple. Understand the purpose or scope of your meetings and tailor your information and activities to that single purpose.

... spreadable. Volunteer training that works in one department of your church will likely be useful – with a few modifications – in others.

... scalable. As you grow, your processes will need to be able to adjust to account for the number of volunteers you have.

... scrappable. If something isn't working, scrap it. Keep the focus on outcomes, engagement, participation and productivity.

Training your volunteers takes commitment, time, effort and energy – but it's so worth it. When you make a commitment to training your volunteers, you'll find that your training will keep everyone focused on growth, your volunteers will become influential members of your congregation, and you'll better be able to anticipate what's next.

> [Read more from Church Community Builder.](#)