

5 Critical Building Blocks for Healthy Volunteer Teams

In Chris Mavity's ebook, 'Your Volunteers: From Come-and-See to Come-and-Serve,' Mavity explains how church leaders can better enable, empower and equip church leaders to better enable, empower and equip our greatest ministry asset – our people.

Volunteers are our boots-on-the-ground and since churches typically have more people than money, space, or staff, volunteer operations require a solid game plan to help evolve people who 'come-and-see' into people who 'come-and-serve.'

So in case you missed it, let's the recap the five steps – recruiting, training, placing, supporting and monitoring – that will help you establish the critical building blocks for healthy volunteer operations.

RECRUIT: There are two common recruitment tactics employed in ministry – slot filling and person selection – with each approach meeting specific needs and with both recruiting strategies being necessary because not all volunteers are created equal. For roles and positions that are short-term and have less influence, filling a slot works fine. But then there are ministry positions where it's important to select the right person with a specific skill set – such as a singer or a worship leader.

TRAIN: There are two types of training, orientation training and ongoing training, and each allows you to communicate expectations, prepare volunteers for service, and impart wisdom. Orientation training helps your volunteers understand the role, responsibilities, and expected outcomes of the assignment. Ongoing training is focused on life-skills development – helping your volunteers become a better version of themselves.

PLACE: Placement is much like completing a jigsaw puzzle. The key is looking at the placement of a volunteer the same way you'd start to assemble a jigsaw puzzle – by learning the basics about them (placing corners and edges) – and creating your puzzle's 'frame.' Only then will you get a sense of who the person is and in time through observation, feedback and results, you will be able to place various inside pieces, allowing you to see and understand even more about the person.

SUPPORT: There are three categories of support: proactive, reactive, and platforming. Proactive support is anything done to support the ministry efforts of the volunteer *prior* to them serving. Reactive support is being available to help solve problems or issues as volunteers attempt something new. And platform support is the ultimate support wherein you assign your volunteers prominent roles for a job well done.

MONITOR: Once we've taken the first four steps, we have to inspect what we expect. And monitoring reveals the numbers that matter. Properly understood and utilized numbers can help you plan effectively and make better decisions. And with a church management system, you can inform, affirm, validate and challenge your assumptions about your ministry.

Think of your volunteer operations like a sports organization, seeing the people in your church as your greatest asset and scouring your pews like scouts from the bleachers in search of the right people for the right positions. The returns from your efforts will exceed the investment of time and energy – *exponentially*.

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