

ENGAGING MILLENNIAL VOLUNTEERS: UNDERSTANDING A NEW BREED OF VOLUNTEERS



volunteering
queensland

Engaging Millennial Volunteers: Understanding a new breed of volunteers

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By 2020 Millennials will account for over 50% of the global workforce, forcing organisations to shape up if they hope to attract the best and brightest of this generation¹. Millennials seek a sense of purpose, and this desire informs their decision when seeking employment experiences.

“ Millennials' career aspirations, attitudes about work, and knowledge of new technologies will define the culture of the 21st century workplace ”

Millennials at Work, PWC, 2014

¹ 2015, Millennials at Work: Reshaping the Workplace, PWC, <https://www.pwc.com/m1/en/services/consulting/documents/millennials-at-work.pdf>

² Taylor, C, 2015, How Credible is Voluntary work as experience, <http://www.hcamag.com/hr-news/how-credible-is-voluntary-work-as-experience-200218.aspx>

³ 2015, Mind The Gap: The 2015 Millennial Survey, Deloitte, <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/global/Documents/About-Deloitte/gx-wef-2015-millennial-survey-executivesummary.pdf>

Millennials seek not only a sense of purpose from their work but also rapid advancement opportunities and continuous feedback, learning and development. They look to their superiors to provide professional guidance but no longer revere them for their accumulated knowledge. Millennials complete immersion in technology means they are highly adept at finding and analytically considering large volumes of information.

They no longer see themselves staying with one employer or even in one profession for the length of their careers but rather seek varied experiences. This will see them change employers and roles a number of times through their careers.

Millennials' approach to work translates directly to their desired experiences when undertaking volunteer work, presenting a challenge for volunteer organisations who will have to alter their practice in order to attract Millennial volunteers.

The value of volunteering for Millennials

Volunteering presents an opportunity for those Millennials looking to develop their professional skills. This becomes increasingly relevant in the case of students who look to volunteering as a means to develop both soft and hard professional skills.

Volunteering is now seen as highly valuable by hiring managers, especially in the case of first time job seekers. Volunteering is an increasingly valuable opportunity for Millennials with hiring managers viewing a

history of volunteer work as a valuable asset in applicants².

This comes as no surprise when considering the growing disparity between employer expectations and students' competencies upon graduation. The strengths that students possess upon graduation including, personal integrity, team work, academic knowledge, flexibility and professionalism are not perceived by employers as valuable, instead they represent hygiene factors that fail to differentiate candidates from one another³. Here volunteering represents a valuable opportunity for Millennials to bridge this gap and gain the skills and experience desired by employers. However volunteering opportunities must provide adequate chances for both professional and skills development to be seen as worthwhile.

"Millennials are just as interested in how a business develops its people and its contribution to society as they are in profits"

Key challenges for successfully engaging Millennials

While students and young people looking to volunteer opportunities as a means to develop professional skills is far from a new concept the nature of the experiences they are seeking has changed. Increasingly these potential volunteers are seeking episodic and project based opportunities that provide them with the opportunity to develop their leadership skills.

Providing Millennials with leadership development

Millennials place a significant premium on leadership skills, however their concept of leadership differs greatly from that of previous generations. So what do these leadership experiences look like for Millennials? For Millennials leadership goes beyond the traditional constructs of authority, decision-making and responsibility. Millennials see leaders as inspirational, strategic thinkers who are passionate about what they do and great with people. Providing these leadership experiences does not necessarily need to be about giving Millennials responsibility or authority over others. Instead leadership experiences should focus on providing experiences that correspond to the skills they see leaders possessing. Giving volunteers the opportunity to make decisions, network and genuinely contribute their ideas will go along way in facilitating Millennials' desire to develop as leaders.

Providing opportunities for Millennials to use & develop their skills

Traditionally volunteer roles have been resigned to auxiliary tasks with work deemed more important, interesting and valuable reserved for paid employees. Managers remain skeptical about the ability of volunteers to undertake more complex work or projects, instead choosing to forgo them if there is not capacity among paid staff. However this represents a missed

opportunity. Millennial volunteers represent a unique resource as their technological aptitude makes them highly adept at sourcing and understanding information. This makes them well positioned to undertake complex projects or tasks. Furthermore their recent, or even current, tertiary education experience means they possess up to the minute knowledge that may prove invaluable to organisations. Furthermore, Millennial volunteers are actively looking to take on more complex work through volunteer roles, so shedding traditional conceptions of the role of volunteers in your organisation will not only help you get the most from Millennial volunteers but also help you attract more volunteers. Utilising practices including role design, feedback and mentoring provides a strong foundation for ensuring Millennials' skills are being fully utilised to the benefit of organisational goals.

Accommodating episodic & project volunteers

Millennials expect varied and interesting employment experiences and rapid career progression. This attitude will challenge organisations hosting Millennial volunteers to increasingly offer episodic and project work in place of more traditional volunteer experiences. Organisations should look away from traditional ideas of retention, instead planning for turnover with volunteers, even in more traditional roles. This approach will allow organisations to utilise skilled Millennial volunteers to undertake project work for which incumbent staff may not have capacity, furthering organisational goals.

“ Only 28% of Millennials feel their current organisations are making full use of the skills they currently have to offer ”

2015 Deloitte Millennial Survey



Resources

Want to know about Millennials? The following links provide fascinating insights from some of Australia's (and the world's) leading consultancies.

Millennials at work: Reshaping the workplace, PWC

<https://www.pwc.com/m1/en/services/consulting/documents/millennials-at-work.pdf>

Annual Millennial Survey 2015 Infographic, Deloitte

<http://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/global/Documents/About-Deloitte/gx-wef-2015-infographic-millennial-survey.pdf>

Annual Millennial Survey 2015 Exec Summary, Deloitte

<http://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/global/Documents/About-Deloitte/gx-wef-2015-millennial-survey-executivesummary.pdf>

Engaging Millennial Volunteers: Role design

The first step on your journey to onboarding Millennials is designing roles that they will want to do. This represents a deviation from traditional thinking in which roles were created based on immediate organisational need, rather than a fluid focus on attracting and utilising talent.

Role or job design is simple in theory but represents a significant challenge for organisations of all sizes. In essence this process involves putting together a range of tasks, duties and responsibilities for an individual to undertake. While seemingly a simple task, it has a key impact on employee engagement.

Creating roles that involve task variety, autonomy, are challenging, interesting and can be clearly linked to larger organisational goals, will help volunteers remain engaged. This will focus more of their energy on their work, resulting in better performance outcomes and more innovative work. While role design is often overlooked it is absolutely key to ensuring the engagement of volunteers and employees alike.

So how can you ensure you're designing volunteer roles that will have Millennials flocking to your organisation, while still ensuring the work is getting done, efficiently, reliably and effectively?



The job characteristics model

While the job characteristics model is certainly not new, in-fact it's approaching its 50th birthday, if utilised correctly it provides a valuable 'how to' for role design. The job characteristics model identifies five core motivational job features and provides a relevant and effective framework for meeting the needs of Millennial volunteers. We know Millennials value purpose and meaning in their work, they want to create something that represents a unique contribution and

desire almost constant feedback. When implemented effectively, designing jobs with reference to the framework will provide volunteers with the ability to experience the outcome and impact of their work, and imbue them with a sense of responsibility over their work. Through this volunteers are given the tools and opportunities to ensure they experience a sense of meaning from their work.

Skill variety

This factor represents the extent to which the volunteer applies a range of skills in their day-to-day experience. When considering the application of skill variety, it is important to separate 'skills' from 'task competence'. For example a volunteer in the HR department may conduct reference checks or answer phone enquires. This skill applied here is not an ability to use the phone, but rather communication. Making this determination will help prevent the allocation of tasks that may be different but in fact utilise the same skill.

Commonly applied skills for volunteers may include:

- Communication
- Multi-tasking
- Attention to detail
- Coordination
- Monitoring
- Service orientation
- Social perceptiveness
- Critical thinking

When designing a volunteer role, link each task or responsibility to a skill to ensure you have a strong variety.



Identity

Roles that provide the incumbent with a sense of identity allow them to take ownership over the completion of a whole piece of work. Work undertaken in this fashion helps volunteers view their work as significant and thus they will invest more of their energy into their work.

This is most easily achieved in roles focused on project work, and this connection is pretty self-explanatory. However all is not lost when it comes to more routine volunteer roles. Try allocating tasks so they can be completed from start to finish by one volunteer rather than allocating only components of a larger task.

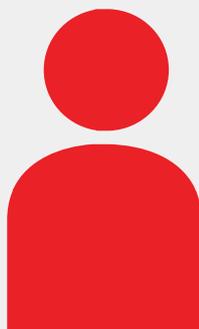


Significance

This represents the amount of impact this role has, and the contribution it makes to wider organisational goals. This factor is potentially the most difficult to satisfy as volunteers often spend very little time per week with the organisation making it potentially difficult to see how this seemingly

small contribution enhances organisational outcomes. Organisational volunteer recognition channels, which consistently and publicly acknowledge the real value of volunteer contributions, both individually and collectively, can overcome this.

Another key factor in ensuring the significance of the volunteer role is maximised is to explain or better yet remove bureaucratic practices. If the majority of the work undertaken is seen as tedious and unnecessary, it will be almost impossible to empower the role with a sense of significance. Here efficiency is your friend, and inviting your volunteer to provide continuous feedback on the effectiveness and efficiency of processes will be highly beneficial. Where you can't implement improvements to processes and policies, explain how they contribute to organisational goals and priorities, as this may not always be clear.



Autonomy

Autonomy denotes the level of discretion a volunteer may have over what they do and how they do it. Increasing autonomy in turn increases responsibility for the outcome of work⁴. While many managers may be hesitant to increase the autonomy of volunteer roles for fear of overloading or overwhelming them, in reality Millennials seek real work experience and will thrive if their role is designed with a reasonable

amount of autonomy. While autonomy is a must, the degree will differ across volunteers depending on their availability and professional confidence. Consider discussing this with your volunteer to gauge their preference and ability to make this commitment. Allow for roles to increase in autonomy periodically as this may suit volunteers whose confidence may grow throughout their time with you.

Autonomy is the factor that most closely links to providing Millennial volunteers with leadership experience. Allowing Millennials to take ownership of their work or project will provide an opportunity for them to demonstrate strategic thinking, decisiveness, passion as well as developing interpersonal skills. Increasing autonomy also has fantastic outcomes for your organisation. People whose work is autonomous are more likely to invest effort into their work and overcome obstacles far more easily.

The role of technology

Technology has the potential to increase volunteers' autonomy exponentially. Millennials are both tech savvy and confident using technology making them fantastic candidates for opportunities that are fully or partially virtual. Encouraging these kind of opportunities will also help attract talented students who aren't able to make a standard weekly commitment but are still seeking volunteer opportunities.



Feedback

Feedback is extremely important to Millennials who seek support and guidance as a core component of their work experiences. Creating multiple forums for the provision of feedback is essential to ensuring volunteer roles are engaging for Millennials. Weekly team huddles and regular check-ins are two fantastic approaches to feedback discussed in the engagement strategies section.

Role enrichment vs. role enlargement

A key trap when evolving roles is role enlargement. Role enlargement sees a role expand, without enhancing the incumbents' autonomy or role identity. For example this may see the addition of process work to a role that is already heavily process driven. Instead consider enriching the role by adding the opportunity to undertake small-scale projects or undertake process improvement activities. These enhance the volunteer's autonomy and role identity by allowing them to undertake a piece of work from start to finish over which they can take ownership.

Supplementing the volunteer's role with coaching, continuous feedback and mentoring will help foster engagement and provide a 'real world experience' to volunteers undertaking the role as their

first step into the working world. Further, job resources such as social support and engagement from colleagues and supervisors provide a valuable means of fostering volunteer engagement.

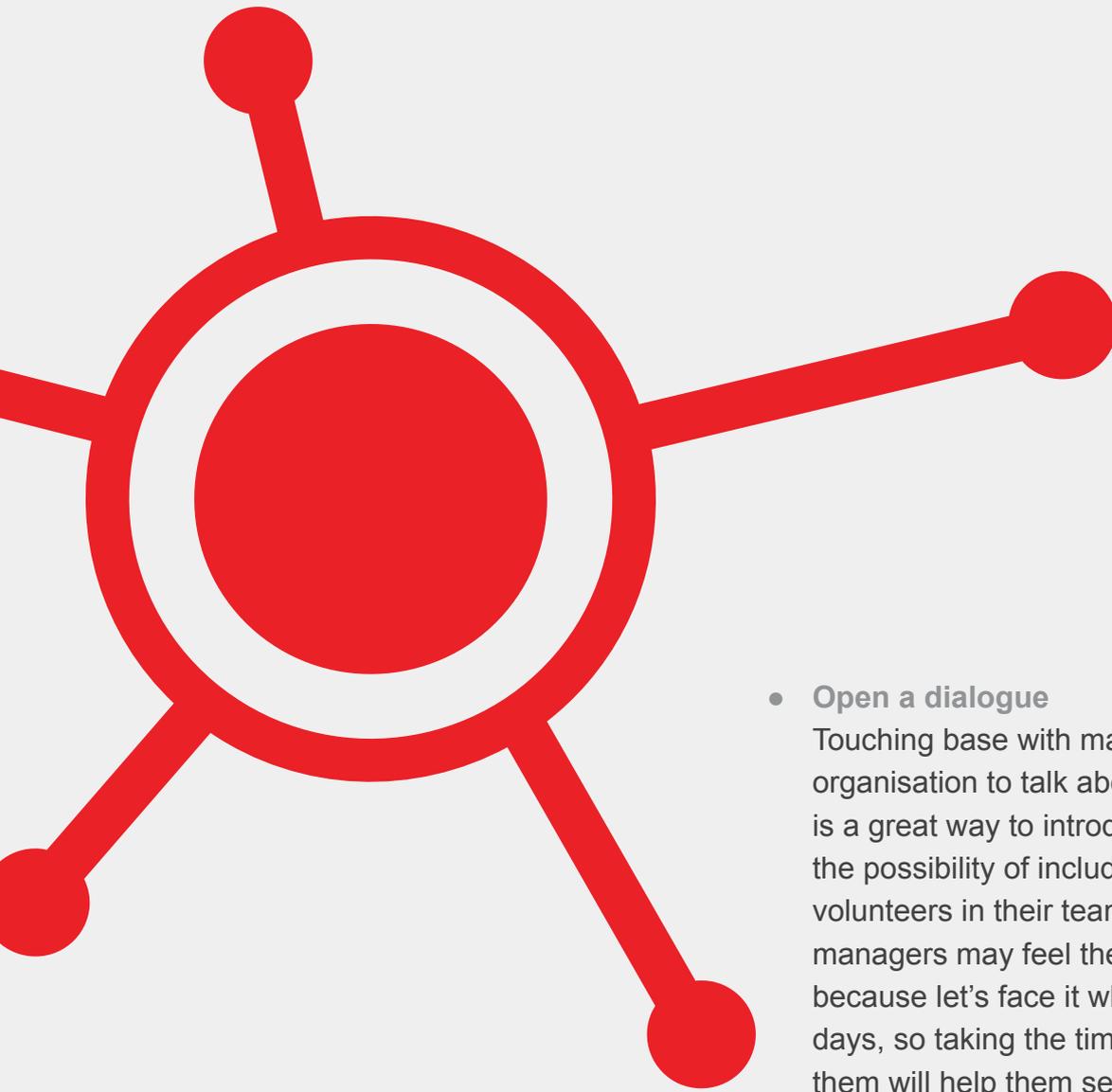
When helping managers design roles, consider what support and resources are available to provide volunteers with coaching, feedback and, importantly, how they can experience social inclusion in the workplace. This not only means seeing friendly faces when they come in to volunteer but also involving them in activities such as team meetings, training sessions and team building. Here managers themselves have a key role to play, as they will have the most contact with the volunteer.



KEY QUESTION

How can you overcome the reality that many managers continue to see volunteers as an auxiliary resource to undertake undesirable tasks rather than as a capable, skilled and valuable resource that can support organisational goals?





Identifying opportunities

Being proactive in identifying possible opportunities for Millennial volunteers will provide more time for planning and designing roles. Keeping the lines of communication open with managers and supervisors will help your volunteer program thrive. Many managers may not have considered the true potential of skilled volunteers to help the organisation reach its goal. Considering the following points will help you to successfully establish networks for identifying volunteer opportunities.

- **Open a dialogue**
Touching base with managers in your organisation to talk about volunteers is a great way to introduce them to the possibility of including Millennial volunteers in their teams. Many managers may feel they are too busy, because let's face it who isn't these days, so taking the time to reach out to them will help them see that taking on volunteers can be a great help to them.
- **Share your skills, expertise & resources**
Empower managers through being a champion of best practice and sharing your knowledge, skills and expertise. This will give them the confidence to take ownership for supporting their volunteers and providing them with meaningful experiences.
- **Provide support**
Positioning yourself as a resource that managers can turn to will help them feel more confident in taking on and supporting Millennial volunteers. Providing support will help win over managers to the idea of taking on volunteers in their team, as it will alleviate any feelings of being 'dumped with the work'.

Role design: Tip sheet

1. Find a balance when designing roles. Allocate tasks to ensure volunteers are utilising a range of skills and have the opportunity to undertake autonomous work.
2. Allow volunteers the opportunity to provide ongoing feedback both in terms of their enjoyment of the role and ways the role can be improved. This may include process and policy improvements or simply adding or removing tasks from the role. Informal catch-ups provide the best opportunity to do this.
3. Accommodate flexible working arrangements wherever possible. Millennials are a dynamic and tech savvy generation so providing them with flexible working arrangements, like working from home, using their own technology and allowing them to set their own working hours will go a long way to ensuring they remain engaged.
4. Create a clear role description for Millennial volunteers. Millennials value structure and providing them with a clear outline of their role will help them excel. This does not mean that the role cannot evolve, instead every time a role change or improvement is made as a result of the feedback process, simply update your role description. You may even invite the volunteer to do this, as a means of taking ownership and exercising autonomy.
5. Articulate how the role contributes to organisational goals. Articulating this as part of the formal role description will help volunteers conceptualise the connectedness of their role to organisational goals and in turn its significance.
6. Consider updating your role description resources to reflect the job characteristics model. Making small changes such as converting 'job purpose' to 'role significance' will help managers ensure they are focusing on the right elements when developing roles. Further, consider including a section to detail the development opportunities that will be available in the role e.g. constant feedback, coaching, involvement in team training sessions, project work, etc.
7. Include process improvement as a key facet of all roles. Making a uniform commitment to involving volunteers in process improvement will help imbed this as an organisational norm.
8. Put the role through the 'would I do it test.' If your answer is no, consider what elements turn you off or what is lacking that makes the role unappealing.
9. Keep the lines of communication open. Collaborating with the managers or supervisors who will ultimately be working with the volunteer is essential to ensure they have the skills and understanding to provide volunteers with a positive experience. Sharing your knowledge and expertise will empower managers and supervisors to take ownership for providing an engaging experience for volunteers.

Engaging Millennial Volunteers: The recruitment attraction strategy

Developing an effective recruitment attraction strategy will help your organisation target and attract the best talent. Taking a considered approach to recruitment will help you tailor your advertising and communication to reach Millennials and present your organisation as a desirable place to volunteer.

Placing the right volunteers in the right roles represents a significant value add for your organisation. This allows you to capitalise on the high skill level of your volunteers to ensure efficiency, output and innovation is maximised.

How to develop an effective attraction strategy

1. Who is your ideal candidate?

Determining who will be the best match for your available position is the first step to successfully hiring volunteers. Making this determination will help you tailor your attraction strategy to carefully target your desired applicant. Consider the lifestyle of your target demographic.

For example students might need time off during exams so they may seek a more flexible arrangement when it comes to volunteering, i.e. one that allows them to set their own timetable.

Creating a profile for your ideal candidate will allow you to develop your attraction strategy to directly target them. By preempting their needs when communicating what both your organisation and the role itself have to offer you will be able to feed the right information into your advertising, ensuring you are directly and effectively targeting the most desirable candidates.

Making this the first step in your attraction strategy will ensure you use the right methods to attract the right people in the right places.

2. Selling your organisation

Presenting an honest and engaging picture of what applicants can expect from working at your organisation can help you attract the best talent. Research shows that where employers were effectively able to communicate what applicants stood to gain from the position elicited significantly higher rates of response than those that didn't.

The first step in doing this is to understand your 'Employer Brand'. The employer brand is not what organisations say about themselves but rather what others say about them. The employer brand represents the public perception of the organisation, mixed with any active attempts an organisation may make to market itself as an employer of choice. With the advent of social media it has become increasingly difficult for organisations to control the information that is out there about their organisation to which potential volunteers and employees may be exposed.

However there are certainly ample opportunities for organisations to actively participate in and guide this dialogue. Smart organisations attempt to contribute to the crafting of their employer brand by promoting their values. As values based organisations not-for-profits have a key

advantage here. An active way to contribute to promoting a positive employer brand is through the design of advertising. Promoting your organisation's character and values as well as its value to prospective employees and volunteers through this medium will help develop your organisation as an employer of choice.

"Organisations that provide a strong sense of purpose have better recruitment outcomes among Millennials"

The employee value proposition

The key tool for organisations attempting to guide their employer brand is the employee value proposition (EVP). Developing an EVP will help you define what your organisation has to offer and what it hopes to gain from the service of volunteers. While traditionally utilised to help recruit paid staff, an EVP can be just as easily applied to volunteers, especially in the case of Millennials who are seeking a work-style experience.

"The 'get' for volunteers encompasses every aspect of the experience, from your mission, values and culture, to the kind of work, training and career development options you offer...the 'give' encompasses what you want from employees including their skills and attitude towards work"

Be clear and concise, don't try to be everything to everyone, instead focus on your core values and those things that you do well as an organisation, as well as the opportunities you are confident can be provided to incoming volunteers.

Consider what are your values and how they are embodied in your organisation. This will be both your goal or purpose as a not-for-profit organisation but also the values that make your organisational culture unique e.g. integrity, passion, accountability, team work.





Tips for getting your EVP to work for you when recruiting Millennials

- Make it specific to the applicant you are trying to attract. For Millennial volunteers, focus on explaining your organisational values, purpose and culture. Research shows potential volunteers in this demographic seek a sense of purpose in their work activities.
- Don't be afraid to evolve beyond generic purpose statements when communicating about your organisation. While these are valuable in letting potential volunteers know what you do, they often fall short of describing who you are. Let potential volunteers in on the unique and appealing aspects of your organisational culture. Let them know if your organisation is inclusive, social, learning oriented, committed to flexibility, open or any other key attractive qualities. This will help you connect with volunteers that will be the right cultural fit for your organisation.
- Be warned, getting carried away listing every positive attribute, whether it applies to your organisation or not will do you more harm than good. Nothing will break the psychological contract with your new volunteer faster than the perception that they have been misled about the culture and opportunities available at your organisation.

The psychological contract

The psychological contract between a volunteer and the organisation hinges on the volunteer's expectations in relation to their role with an organisation. This is shaped through interactions between the organisation and volunteer and encompasses what the volunteer expects from the organisation.

Honesty is key to ensuring the psychological contract remains strong. If volunteers are misled, causing their expectations to be inconsistent with their experiences, the psychological contract will be broken. This will cause volunteers to become unengaged or worse, actively disengaged, resulting in poor work quality and low productivity and eventual exodus from the organisation.

The psychological contract develops in the early stages of a prospective volunteer's engagement with the organisation including the application and interview stage. Therefore it is exceptionally important to represent both the organisation and the role as honestly as possible. This does not mean highlighting potentially negative elements of the role or organisation but rather not providing false or misleading claims. Be honest about what you have to offer and what you don't.

3. Make the benefits of the role clear

Utilise your preferred candidate profile to determine what the best selling points of the role will be. Does your preferred candidate seek flexibility, mentoring or training opportunities? Can you offer a diversity of work tasks, the potential for the volunteer to have a hand in shaping the role? Is there succession planning available to help the volunteer transition to new opportunities as their skills and knowledge of the organisation grows.

Before communicating the potential benefits of the role consider what is practicable. If you plan to offer coaching or training, ensure a plan has been established for delivering this to the volunteer. This can be initiated as part of their onboarding to ensure continuity between expectations and experience.

Avoid non-specific descriptions that fail to outline what the role is about. While all roles include some forms of general and ad-hoc work, creating a clear picture of what key tasks will be involved will help potential applicants decide if the role is for them. Alternatively if you are seeking a volunteer to undertake project work, or to take a leading part in determining the scope of the role, make this clear, along with the associated benefits.

In targeting Millennial students, communicating the real work experience element is crucial. Showing Millennials that a volunteer role with your organisation will provide them with meaningful work experience is a significant selling point.



The inverted pyramid

When creating your job ad make sure you lead with the information that is most important to your ideal candidate. Consider leading with your EVP and information about the benefits of the role.

4. Using targeted advertising to reach your ideal candidate?

While online methods have become the dominant means of advertising, this represents a diverse space, making it difficult to determine which sites will provide the most effective outcomes. Reflect on your ideal candidate profile to determine where they are most likely to be seeking out volunteer opportunities.

If you are seeking to attract university students, a key strategy is to utilise university career websites. Connect directly with university careers and employment teams, who often utilise social media to advertise available volunteering opportunities directly to students. This can provide a targeted and cost-effective means of reaching current university students.

A key resource to utilise when determining the best avenues for advertising is previous advertising experiences. If you have previously advertised for the role, or a similar role, reflect on what worked, what didn't and why?

How are applicants viewing the process?

Application processes that are unnecessarily complicated will turn off applicants. When seeking to engage Millennials consider soliciting only essential information. If you are seeking to fill a flexible dynamic role, consider asking for a CV and short cover letter rather than a standard application form. CV's and cover letters provide a clearer picture of the applicant's personality and strengths, something that is ideal when seeking skilled volunteers for less structured roles.

5. Set a recruitment timeline

Successful recruitment is enhanced through setting a clear and manageable timeframe for the recruitment process. If you take too long to contact applicants, arrange interviews and make an offer, you can lose the best applicants. Before you commence advertising for a volunteer set your recruitment timeline. Consider the following and set a reasonable timeframe in which to complete each stage of the application process.

1. When do you plan to advertise?
2. Set a closing date for applications. Keep it as short as possible, no more than two weeks.
3. Shortlist applications as they come in, rather than after the closing date. This will allow you to invite shortlisted applicants to interview within a number of days of the closing date.
4. Set a date range for your interview - limit this to a one-week timeframe.
5. Determine a timeframe for making an offer to the preferred candidate after the interview process is complete. This should easily be done within no more than two days of interviews.
6. If you intend to contact referees before making an offer, ensure you collect this information at interview to expedite this process.
7. Ensure that the interviewer or panel contacts unsuccessful interviewees by phone within the same timeframe, this ensures that even those who are not successful in gaining a position leave the experience with a positive view of your organisation.

Setting your timeline in advance will help you stick to it, despite the pressure of an already busy workload.

"An offer should be made to the preferred candidate within a maximum of two weeks of inviting them to interview"



Volunteering Qld

Recruitment attraction strategy

Position title	<input type="text"/>	
Reason for vacancy	<input type="text"/>	
Newly created role?	Yes	No
Job reference #	<input type="text"/>	
Date advertised	<input type="text"/>	
Applications close	<input type="text"/>	
Hiring manager	<input type="text"/>	

Ideal candidate

What demographics are you targeting? What are their lifestyle factors?

Why work at this organisation?

Describe why working at your organisation would be appealing.

Make it specific to your ideal candidate; draw on your employee value proposition (EVP).

Why work in this role?

What does this role offer your ideal applicant? Virtual or flexible working arrangements, professional or leadership development? Mentoring opportunities? Project based? Draw on your EVP.

Previous advertising activity?

What has been the outcome of advertising for similar role?

What can be learned from these experiences?

Media plan

Based on your ideal applicant and previous advertising experiences, determine what media sources you can use to attract the most suitable candidates and why.

Organisation website	<input type="checkbox"/>	Volunteering Qld	<input type="checkbox"/>	Seek Volunteer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Griffith careers	<input type="checkbox"/>	QUT careers	<input type="checkbox"/>	UQ careers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local papers	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Recruitment timeline

Set dates for completing shortlisting, interviewing applicants, determining a preferred candidate, making an offer and a preferred start date.

Date advertised	<input type="text"/>
Closing date	<input type="text"/>
Date shortlisting will be completed	<input type="text"/>
Date range for interviews	<input type="text"/>
Offer date	<input type="text"/>
Ideal start date	<input type="text"/>

Advertising template

Search results title

Short description

Use this to target your ideal applicant

Body

Use the inverted pyramid to ensure that every applicant hears your best selling points

Time commitment

What is the timeframe? Is there a weekly required commitment or is it a self directed project?

Location

Advertising categories

Call to action

Include how applicants can apply, application closing dates. Specify if you intend to only contact short-listed candidates or if short-listed candidates will be required to complete any employment checks

Attachments

Include a position description to provide potential applicants with a clear idea of the role

Engaging Millennial Volunteers: Engagement strategies

“ Getting volunteers in the door is only the first step towards ensuring the process is a success. It is essential to consider engagement strategies from the volunteer's first day with you to their last ”

Onboarding

The value of onboarding can often be overlooked by busy teams recruiting volunteers to provide much needed support. However taking even a small amount of time to plan for your new volunteer's first day can make a world of difference to their experience. Supporting your new volunteer to settle into the organisation will help give them the confidence to excel in their work and inturn maximise their contribution.



Preparing for your volunteer's first day

1. Get the physical space ready

Making sure everything is set up for your volunteer is essential to starting their experience off right. Remember, Millennials are looking to make a meaningful contribution, so try to avoid spending their first day waiting for computers, desk space and logons and instead save this time for networking and orientation activities!

2. Advertise your new recruit

Ensure your new volunteer has been added to all the relevant distribution lists, let their team members know who they are and when they'll be joining the organisation. Let anyone in the wider organisation who may have contact with them know about their arrival as well. For example if they will need to set up their computer profile, let IT know to expect this. This will help your new team member feel at home right away!

3. Create a plan for their first day

Ensure your volunteer knows where they're going and who their meeting with on their first day. Sending a welcome email with this information as well as any access and parking info will help them feel confident. Further, create a checklist for their first day and prepare any necessary new starter paperwork to be completed. Through sufficient planning your volunteer should have all their new starter requirements completed on the first day and if they don't have any compulsory training to undertake, should have sufficient time left to commence work.

4. Get your new recruit networking

Introduce your new recruit to their team, their mentor and others within the organisation with whom they may interact.



Feedback

Providing consistent feedback through informal catch-ups is an easy-to-implement way of ensuring your Millennials remain engaged. Feedback can be delivered one on one or through small group engagements sessions. Team huddles provide an excellent, efficient means of boosting feedback and providing the opportunities for volunteers to engage with their team.



The team huddle

If there are no established team meetings consider introducing a weekly huddle. While formal team meetings are often seen as an unnecessary time sucker by busy staff, huddles are an effective and efficient way of keeping the team up-to-date with each other's work. It is also a forum for providing feedback and highlighting the contribution and achievements of all team members, including volunteers. Huddles provide a unique opportunity to expose volunteers to the work being undertaken by other team members, giving them the chance to get involved and gain a greater understanding of what opportunities might be available.

Follow these tips for a successful weekly huddle:

1. Keep it small

If you're going to huddle weekly, consider keeping it to you immediate team to keep updates relevant.

2. Keep it positive

Use your huddle as an opportunity to share good news and update the team on the achievements and hard work of all team members. Make positive feedback a priority of these sessions.

3. Keep it short

Keep your huddle as brief as possible. The huddle should function as an update session and keeping all updates as brief and relevant as possible will ensure your team will be willing to participate and may even enjoy it!

4. Keep your team engaged

Take some time to communicate your organisational vision. Communicating this regularly will help your team members see how their work connects to larger organisational goals.





While the team huddle is a fantastic engagement tool consider organising one on one check-ins to provide more in-depth feedback as well as providing volunteers with the opportunity to provide feedback themselves. While a seemingly simple concept, if applied effectively check-ins can enhance engagement and remove any anxiety associated with more traditional performance management tools. Further, it provides a far more effective tool than engagement or online surveys that merely pay lip service to the genuine concerns of employees and volunteers. Nothing will damage engagement faster than soliciting feedback that is not acted on or taken into consideration. In this way check-ins present a genuine opportunity to boost engagement.

Check-ins also provide a fantastic forum for delivering mentoring and coaching. Using the goals and aspirations template can help guide these sessions. Coordinating

your timeline with your intended check-ins will help keep you on track and ensure any goals are actioned and do not fall by the wayside. Check-ins are also an effective tool when working with virtual or offsite volunteers. While face-to-face check-ins may not be possible, skype or even email can present a functional alternative.

Having previously been overlooked for more traditional forms of performance management, check-ins are now taking centre stage as the performance management tool of choice for many large, forward-thinking organisations. Even if your wider organisation is still attached to traditional performance management processes don't be afraid to break out of the mould. This could even be an opportunity for you to showcase the effectiveness and benefits of this new approach and become a best practice leader in performance management within your organisation.

Regular check-ins at Adobe

Adobe has thrown out the book when it comes to performance management, swapping cumbersome annual reviews for more organic and frequent check-ins. In 2012 Adobe made this move in response to the realisation that traditional methods were not delivering, failing to motivate and inspire staff, or effectively acknowledge their achievements and development needs. As a contrast the check-ins have proved highly effective for both Adobe's people and its bottom line.

“Managers are now having on-going, genuine conversations with their team members; employees are engaged in feedback; we are saving approximately 80,000 hours of our manager's time in the annual review process; and our voluntary attrition continues to trend downward.”

Donna Morris, SVP People & Places, Adobe

The success of this program is a testament to the effectiveness of consistent, considered and genuine feedback in ensuring engagement.

Millennials are more committed than any other generation to ongoing learning and development

Millennials at Work, PWC, 2014

Exit feedback

Just because your volunteer has let you know they're ready to move on it doesn't mean the feedback journey is over just yet. Make sure you take the opportunity to find out what worked for them, what didn't and to take onboard any final suggestions they may have about the role. This can help you immensely when you next recruit for the role or even a similar role.

Coaching & mentoring

Ongoing coaching and mentoring is a fantastic way to engage Millennials as they look to senior employees and managers to provide career guidance. Allocating a mentor to your volunteer who can support them in their personal and professional development, will go along way towards keeping them engaged.

The mentoring role may be taken on by the volunteers line manager or another senior employee in their team. Mentoring can be undertaken as an additional component to the provision of feedback and goal planning, however, keeping it consistent will provide the best experience for volunteers.

This may provide an opportunity for line managers to allocate mentoring and development to a senior member of their team who is looking to expand their leadership skills. This may help alleviate the time pressure for managers, especially for those who may have a number of volunteers in their team.

KEY QUESTION

How do you integrate best practice into your organisation and help managers overcome preconceptions about the value of investing time in their volunteers?



Goals & aspirations plan

Expectations

Training

Project work

Organisational exposure

Coaching & mentoring

Opportunities

Training

Project work

Organisational exposure

Coaching & mentoring

Timeline

Create a timeline that details your initial catch up, when you plan to follow up as well as creating a plan for mentoring sessions, dates for available training the volunteer can attend and documenting any potential projects that the volunteer can become involved in.





Engaging Millennial Volunteers: A change enablement approach

Knowing what you're doing is only half the battle when it comes to launching a new way of doing things. Letting others know what you're doing and getting them on board represents the other, far more difficult, half. Managing change can be exceptionally difficult without the right tools and a plan of action to help navigate the myriad of obstacles you'll face. The following presents a guided approach to enabling change that will help you launch your Millennial volunteer program.

1 Selling the 'why'

If you couldn't explain why something is happening and why a line manager should care then it's time to go back to the drawing board. Emphasising the 'why' of change is essential to generating buy in among stakeholders. Creating a vision is the first step towards spearheading your new program.

The A.D.K.A.R framework provides a strong tool to see how your change measures up and where you need to improve, before rolling it out. Essentially it will allow you to transform your vision into an action plan. The framework will help you both successfully advocate your change as well as plan for its implementation. However, not all of the components are going to apply depending on the nature of the change, so don't overthink it. Instead think of it more as a checklist to ensure you've considered what's needed to make your change happen!

A.D.K.A.R framework

A

Awareness

The first step in successfully creating change is to create awareness. The key here is to consider why the change is necessary and create a compelling way to articulate this from both your perspective and in a way that is going to appeal to any stakeholders involved. Remember, not everyone is going to see things the way you do. Consider how the change, and the reasons behind it, will be understood by others. This is a great first step to creating

a compelling vision, and being able to communicate it. This is key to getting buy-in from senior organisational leaders.

Considering what they want to know and what reasons they would focus on (often the financial bottom line) will help you advocate up.

The second key here is communication. This may seem pretty straight forward however many a change initiative has fallen flat through a lack of communication. So remember communicate, communicate, communicate and then communicate some more. This should be done both directly by emailing or picking up the phone and more broadly through formal organisational communication channels. Creating a strong narrative through continued communication will help you gain and maintain traction.

Ask yourself:

1. *Why is this change necessary?*
2. *How may others view the reasons for the change, will they be resistant?*
3. *How will the change add value to the organisation? (Senior management may be skeptical of the return on investment when it comes to engaging volunteers, so addressing the issue from this angle will help expedite buy-in from this group.)*
4. *How can I craft communication to address others' understanding of the change to ensure they understand the vision?*

D

Desire

Consider what factors will promote a genuine desire in people to support the change. One clear winner is ensuring there is something in it for those it will affect. This

is an easy sell when engaging Millennial volunteers as they provide support to managers and team members, improve efficiency, lessen others' workloads and undertake projects that would otherwise be abandoned.

Ask yourself:

1. *Why would others want to adopt the change? Put it through the what's in it for me test to find out.*
2. *Have you planned for sufficient consultation to ensure participants feel the change will be of benefit to them directly?*

K Knowledge

A change isn't likely to get off the ground if those involved don't have the knowledge to implement it. Managers and team members alike will need to know not only what the Millennial volunteer program is about but how to make it as effective as possible. Share your resources with teams and undertake information sessions to ensure they have access to the information they need. Giving them the opportunity to ask questions will empower them to develop their knowledge.

Ask yourself:

1. *What skills and knowledge will managers need to successfully support Millennial volunteers?*
2. *How can I position myself as a resource to ensure they have the knowledge they need?*

A Ability

Ensuring participants have the ability to support the change is essential to seeing it succeed. This component sees knowledge transformed into action and is certainly easier said than done. Ensuring managers and team members have the ability to undertake what is needed for the change to succeed, requires ongoing monitoring and support and this will vary from person to person.

Ask yourself:

1. *What abilities will managers need to effectively implement this change?*
2. *What training will be required and how should it be delivered?*
3. *How can I provide ongoing support and coaching to managers to help their ability grow?*

R Reinforcement

Reinforcement is all about reward and acknowledgement and driving the what's in it for me angle. Be generous with your praise and feedback. Acknowledge the achievements of those who have adopted the change as often as possible. This will no doubt help you get the attention of other teams who were less inclined to get involved the first time around.

But don't forget to keep learning from your experiences and the feedback others are providing. Keep thinking about new ways to provide support and new strategies for engaging more and more people in the amazing opportunity you are providing.

2 Building a coalition of support

While whole of organisation adoption may represent the ultimate goal, building a support network is the first step to seeing your Millennial volunteer program take off. Focus on cultivating the support of those who are open to your vision. Selling your program to the most receptive members of your organisation in the first instance will help develop a support base.

Achieving this mass of support as early as possible in the process will help your program gain momentum⁵. Where you can, seek out high-ranking members of your organisation to support your change initiative. The more heavy hitters you have on your team, the faster your change will progress. This by no means suggests that if you can't win over any heavy hitters your change is doomed; it may simply take a little longer and require a bit more grit from your support base.

No matter the nature of your coalition of support, leverage these change champions as a resource to advocate for your program. This will help when it comes to advocating up to get that buy in from senior management. Having managers support your program is a material demonstration of its value to the organisation, making it easier for organisational leaders to see it as a benefit rather than a costly inconvenience.

3 Pilot your Program

Capitalise on your supporters. Approach those who have been most receptive to be the first to experience the program (and the first to benefit from it). This will help you iron out any bugs in a supportive environment. Piloting the program with a few select teams will help determine what works for your organisation and what doesn't.

It also represents a fantastic opportunity to solicit feedback to help you better tailor your approach to fit your organisational culture. A successful pilot will best position the program to get noticed by senior management for all the right reasons. Being able to demonstrate this return on investment will be a serious gold star in the eyes of senior leadership.

⁵ Kotter, J, 2007, Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail. Harvard Business Review, 85(1): 96-103

4 Overcome resistance

The reality is not everyone is going to be immediately responsive to your vision. No matter how well you plan for, communicate and sell it. People may react emotionally rather than rationally, distorting their ability to develop a true understanding of the change. Human beings are naturally skeptical of the value of change and often view it as synonymous with increased workloads or conversely as a threat to their job security. In the case of introducing Millennial volunteers you'll most likely experience the former from managers and the latter from the staff that will ultimately be working alongside the new volunteers.

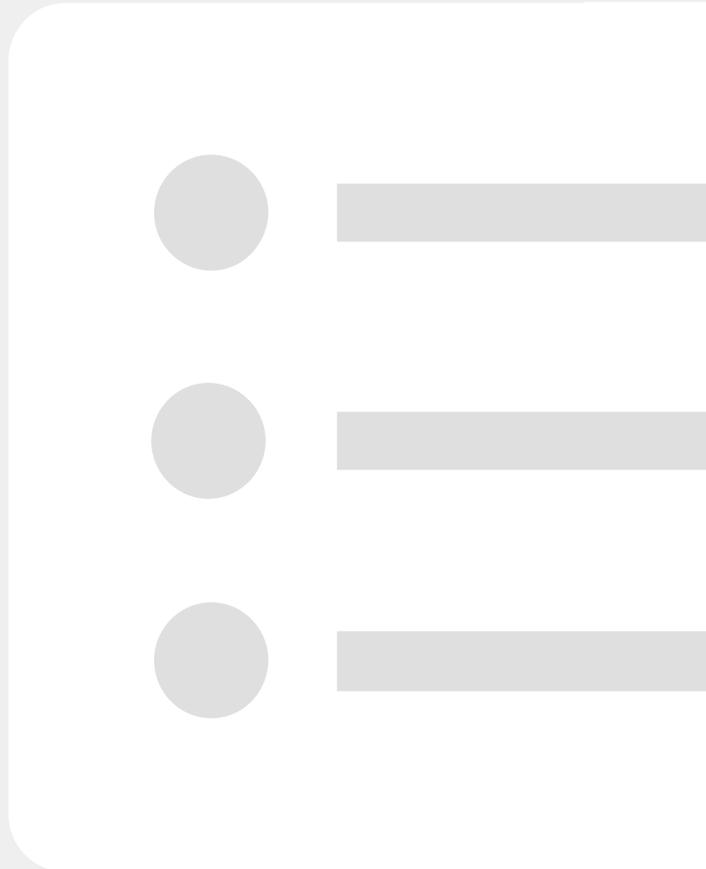
Individuals may find change threatening to their status within their teams and the organisation as a whole. Bringing volunteers into a team can be seen as a threat to the status of paid team members. With volunteers performing valuable work, team members may become concerned that their value within the team is diminished or that the security of their position is under threat. Similarly individuals may find the sense of uncertainty disruptive.

When individuals react emotionally it creates a self-imposed barrier to change, that may have a significant impact on the initiative as a whole. Identifying and breaking down barriers to change caused by individuals' emotional reactions early on, will go a long way in mitigating resistance. Identifying the factors that might concern individuals faced with change and ensuring you address them in your communication, will help you break down barriers to change. Addressing these

factors will help you bring people back to a point where they're ready to approach the change through rational thinking rather than emotional response.

The following link provides an overview of the SCARF models, a useful framework for addressing resistance to change.

http://www.your-brain-at-work.com/files/NLJ_SCARFUS.pdf Not working





Volunteering Queensland works to advance the interests and capacity of community, through effective and innovative volunteering, social participation and civic engagement.

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