Leveraging the Passion, Talent and Volunteerism of Senior Citizens to Grow your Organization and Give Back to your Community

Presenters: Sue Paul—Executive Director
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Presentation will cover:

• Mission, history and culture
• Overview of the volunteer program and role of senior citizens as volunteers
• Key ingredients to the success of the Warhawk’s volunteer program
• Panel discussion
• Audience share best practices
Mission:

The Mission of the Warhawk Air Museum is to preserve and teach the history of American Veterans and their contributions to the freedoms we value today, and to show the relationship of our country and its citizens, to those wars which so strongly impacted our nation and the world at large.
History:
Founded in 1989 in a 7,000 square foot hanger in Caldwell, Idaho, with the focus to preserve the history of the World War II era.
History:

• In 2001, moved to current location in Nampa, Idaho
• Museum grew to fill 20,000 square feet
History:

- In 2011, added an additional 20,000 square feet preserving the history of the Cold War
- Today, the Warhawk Air Museum is known throughout the country for its dedication to military aviation history
- Annually, visitors come from around the country and outside the US
Culture:

• Museum is more about *people* than *things*
• Visitors come to the museum to see *things* but stay because of the stories about *people*
Overview of Volunteer Program:

• Volunteers have been key to growth and success

• Grown from one part-time volunteer in 1989 to 70 committed volunteers today with a part-time Volunteer Coordinator

• Over 225,000 volunteer hours

• Approximately 30 volunteers for each paid employee

• 90% of volunteers are senior citizens
Seniors are Valuable Volunteers:

- Availability and time
- Knowledge
- Life experience
- Enthusiasm and energy
Seniors are Valuable Volunteers:

• Most of the volunteers are veterans which links nicely with museum’s mission
• “Two-way street”:
  • Museum has access to talented people
  • Seniors develop a sense of purpose and meaning while volunteering
Examples of Programs using Seniors as Volunteers:

1) Bridging the Generations
Examples of Programs using Seniors as Volunteers:

2) Veteran’s History Project
Examples of Programs using Seniors as Volunteers:

3) Veteran’s Breakfast
Examples of Programs using Seniors as Volunteers:

4) Kilroy Coffee Klatch
Examples of Programs using Seniors as Volunteers:

5) Annual Warbird Roundup
Examples of Programs using Seniors as Volunteers:

6) Museum tours
Examples of other Volunteer Roles assumed by Seniors:

• Clean-up days
• Landscaping
• Newsletter
• Monitor museum during business hours
• Answer guest questions
• Cut coupons
• Copying
Recruitment of Volunteers:

• Recruitment is an ongoing activity
  • Kilroy Coffee Klatch
  • Speaking at service clubs
  • Special events at the museum

• “Word of mouth”

• Other sources available to the community:
  • AARP
  • SCORE
Recruitment of Volunteers:

- Applications online and at museum
- Background checks performed
- Applicants invited to new volunteer orientation meeting
Volunteer Coordinator is Key to Successful Volunteer Program

• Roles and responsibilities:
  • Coordinates all volunteer activities
  • Assist with orientation and training
  • Volunteer opportunities communicated
  • Scheduling and assignments
  • Facilitates communication with and between volunteers
  • Tracks volunteer hours
  • Recognition and appreciation
  • Provides feedback
  • Makes sure volunteers are having fun
Key Ingredients for a Successful Volunteer Program

1) Have a clear mission
   a) Allow the volunteers to find their passion
      • Important for the volunteers to have fun
      • Volunteers find a sense of purpose—especially seniors
   b) Provide opportunities to grow
   c) Volunteers are exposed to every program
Key Ingredients for a Successful Volunteer Program

2) Training and orientation
   • Structured training and orientation program
   • Critical to providing clarity, confidence, and independence for volunteers to execute their jobs/roles
Key Ingredients for a Successful Volunteer Program

2) Training and orientation

• New volunteer orientation and training meeting
  • Introductions
  • Expectations clearly communicated
  • Volunteer packets
  • Volunteer talks to group
  • Tours offered

• Time and effort required to learn about museum before volunteering starts
Key Ingredients for a Successful Volunteer Program

3) Appreciation

• Rewarding and recognizing volunteers is critical
• Demonstrate how volunteers actions/contributions impact the success of the museum
• Don’t usually single out volunteers for recognition
• Examples:
  • Service pins
  • Picnics, Christmas dinner, summer BBQ
  • Birthday, get well, and sympathy cards and letters
Moderated Panel Discussion
Facilitated Discussion with Audience

Best Practices
Key Take-aways

• Non-profits provide an ideal opportunity for seniors to volunteer!

• Key elements of a successful volunteer program:
  • Have a clear mission for volunteers
  • Implement an effective training and orientation program
  • Make sure volunteers feel appreciated
Copies of today’s presentation will be available electronically.

Contact

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