

# Ideas That Work !!

## How do you move your residents to Membership?

What are your recruitment practices? Why is a strong Membership base important? Is your Membership your only source of Volunteers? Whether your organization is recruiting Membership, Participants or Volunteers, there are some general principles that apply.

Know that the Community Associations and Community Leagues in Alberta are unique. Nowhere else do community volunteers working together to build, maintain, operate, govern, and raise or generate the fund required to sustain community facilities and amenities. Your current Membership, Participants and Volunteers are your greatest asset and ambassadors. They have an understanding and belief in the organization and the difference it has made in the community. "Passion sells!" Their passion will sell your organization.

- Tell the story of the community, the uniqueness of your neighbourhoods and your Community Association's contribution to "pride of community."
- Highlight the history, activities and achievements of the organization and your community vision for the near and distant future.
- Know and communicate the Vision, Mission, Goals, Governance and Structure of the organization.
- State clearly the benefits of membership, participation and volunteering.
- Articulate clearly the needs of the organization.
- State the difference their involvement will make to the community and for the individual.

## How do you move your Membership to Participation?

Number one; know your current and potential membership; your community demographics, their interest and needs.

Number two; communicate, communicate, communicate. Nobody will participate if they do not know what is offered, the benefit to them, and that your place is friendly and welcoming. Past success does not guarantee future success. Know your community and meet their needs, use your current participants as ambassadors. The people will come!

## How do you move your Membership from Participation to Volunteering?

Recruitment is a competitive business. There are 7000 registered non profit organizations in Calgary that utilize the efforts of volunteers. You need to distinguish your organization, and be prepared to manage, maximize and celebrate the skills, talent and time that each volunteer contributes.

***What motivates an individual to say, "Yes"?*** The personal approach works the best. When asked why someone has not volunteered the frequent answer is "***nobody asked me***" and "***I didn't know what they needed.***"

Successful recruitment and retention of volunteers requires an understanding of what motivates prospects. It is an "exchange"; the individual has gifts to give and expects a benefit in return. The desire is for mutual benefit. The benefit to the volunteer may be the opportunity to make a difference in the community, to learn, to develop skills or interest, networking, to further the organization's values and goals, or to give back to the organization of community. Determine the valued benefit for each volunteer because that is the answer to retention.

Volunteer management is essentially human resource management. Consider adapting and adopting the human resource management processes used by business. For example develop a recruitment plan that includes:

- Identify your needs
- Job Descriptions for positions
- Interview process for placement match to interest and skills

- Organization orientation
- Job orientation/responsibilities
- Expectations/limitations
- Job and personal training/development
- Advice & support sources
- Feedback/Input opportunity
- Evaluation process
- Recognition/celebration of success

Know your organizational needs. Have a range of volunteer opportunities. Include short or long term opportunities, leadership or support positions, Board or Directors or a Committee, program/activity or special event, clerical/bookkeeping support, maintenance/handyman, or gardening/grounds caregiver. Know the skills and time required to successfully do the job. Mentor, support and evaluate the individuals in their position, or project so that the outcome is successful. Success builds!

March is proclaimed annually to be Community Association Membership Awareness month and National Volunteer Week is in April. Even on the calendar they are closely related.



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