WORKING WITH VOLUNTEERS

What's needed to recruit, engage, support, and encourage volunteers in doing tasks in an Ethical Society context?

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WORKING WITH VOLUNTEERS

Three areas for attention

- Engagement
  - recruiting with an eye to serving both task and volunteer
- Support
- Evaluation

Evaluation

Support

Engagement

EVALUATION

Begin with the end in mind

EVALUATION

- Is the person happy and learning? (Enthusiasm)
- Is the task being accomplished? (Effectiveness)
- Evaluate success of *goals* and the *match*, rather than evaluating a person

ENGAGEMENT

Recruiting with an eye to serving both task and volunteer

ENGAGEMENT

Engaging an individual in service to the Society and the larger world will be different depending on the person's:

- Passions or longings: areas of interest
- Abilities and training: capacities
- Ways of serving: gifts, "calling," or direction
- Personality or style: characteristics
- Life experiences

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PASSIONS OR LONGINGS TO CONTRIBUTE

- How oriented to contributing to others
- Areas of interest – *where* to apply skills, gifts, personality, experiences
- What really inspires the person to contribute, to serve, to help?
  - Hopes, desires, dreams, ambitions?
  - **Emotional heartbeat**
  - More than just a passing interest

EXAMPLES: AREAS OF INTEREST

- Working with children, teaching children about something specific (art, music, creativity, communication, optimism, religions, etc.)
- Changing the world: justice, peace, etc.
- Helping individuals, as in times of crisis or hurting (healing the sick, alleviating effects of poverty, helping support emotionally or physically)
- Music

MORE EXAMPLES: AREAS OF INTEREST

- Administration: helping the organization or group get and stay organized and on task, helping with finances
- Ideas and philosophy: study, teaching, writing, speaking
- Computers: working with them, designing systems, doing the technical "behind the scenes" work
- Relationship and life skills
- Etc.

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ABILITIES AND TRAINING

Basis of *competence and capacity* for a task
- Abilities
  - Specific skills and talents that the person has *demonstrated* somewhere in their life
- Training and education
  - Specific *learning* of skills, profession

ABILITIES

- Average person has 500+ different skills and abilities
- Inborn or developed: doesn't really matter for this purpose
- Opportunity to stretch and growth
- Range of abilities includes: music to organizing to empathy to numbers to speaking skill, etc.

TRAINING

What specific education or training has the person had?

- Range includes: teaching certificate, specific computer software or hardware training or education, mediation, nursing, counseling, carpentry, CPA, CPR, first aid, law or paralegal, musical training, etc.
- Often involves a specific certificate or diploma
- Some long (nursing education e.g.)
- Some shorter (CPR training e.g.)

ABILITIES AND TRAINING

- Abilities and training predict likely *competencies*
- What one does / can do at work doesn't necessarily determine volunteer matches:
  - Some prefer to work in their areas of strong competency, or same area as their job
  - Others prefer to develop and stretch their abilities, not in the same area, e.g., of their job
- Society can support growth/stretching
  - *Develop* abilities and skills through mentoring, partnering, other support
  - Recommend or facilitate training as appropriate (e.g. lay leadership summer school, CPR)

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WAYS OF SERVING: DIRECTION

- People with the same passions and competencies have **choices of how to serve**
- Ways of serving: in what **ways** are passions served and competencies applied?
- Sometimes called "**gifts**" to emphasize that it's a service to others, a contribution to their life
- Some call the ways of serving "**callings**"
  - Sense of being **called down a path**
  - Path = a way of serving
- A **direction:** in what **direction** are passions served, competencies applied?

WAYS OF SERVING

Contrasting:
Ways of Serving vs. Passions & Competencies

- Example: Music
  - As **passion** / area of **interest**
  - As musical **ability** and **training**
- Many **ways** of serving
  - **Create and play** music on Sunday for others' joy
  - **Teach** adults or children to sing or play instrument
  - **Manage** which musicians will play on which Sunday
  - **Speak or write** about the value of music to ethics

SOME EXAMPLES:
WAYS OF SERVING

- Leading, helping voice the vision, helping identify or discover vision, helping others stay focused on the vision
- Managing, helping a group stay on task or stay organized, facilitating a group to fulfill its vision
- Supporting others in a time of loss or in getting something done, caring, encouraging, giving time and/or money
- Sharing knowledge, imparting information, helping others grasp a concept or area of learning, teaching, training

MORE EXAMPLES:
WAYS OF SERVING

- Problem-solving: identifying solutions to meet needs
- Being hospitable and welcoming, hosting events, greeting warmly
- Creating or arranging for the pleasure of others; beauty, ease, comfort, joy; might be through music, carpentry, graphics, web design
- Writing, speaking, perhaps specifically about a topic: ethics, humanism, relationships, science, communication

MORE EXAMPLES:
WAYS OF SERVING

- Healing, reconciling, helping others relate to people more effectively, helping people recover from behavior and habits that aren't serving them
- Setting or communicating boundaries, correcting others, setting or communicating standards
- Leading ceremonies, chairing platform meetings
- Wise management of financial assets, informing about finances through reports, record-keeping

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PERSONALITY OR STYLE

- Personality or style influences
  - how people do the tasks they do,
  - how they contribute to the process and relationships while doing certain tasks, and
  - how much they'll likely enjoy doing certain tasks
- "Personality" is about *different healthy ways* people tend to act and interact
- For some tasks, some personalities are more likely to be a "fit" for effectiveness of the task and the enjoyment of the volunteer

PERSONALITY OR STYLE

- All of these listed are healthy personality qualities characteristic of human diversity
  - Troubled or unhealthy personalities are another issue
- Some healthy personality qualities are more helpful in some tasks or assignments than in others

Example: Is the person introverted or extraverted?
  - Does she prefer tasks she does alone and without interruption?
  - Or, Does he prefer tasks where he gets to interact socially with a lot of people?

PERSONALITY: MORE EXAMPLES

- Does the person prefer to take the lead or to be given tasks to do?
- When in interacting with others, does the person tend to tell or to ask? (directive / guiding)
- Does the person prefer working with concepts/ideas/numbers or people?
- Does the person tend to be more patient or impatient with others?

PERSONALITY: MORE EXAMPLES

- Is the person more drawn to the concrete or the abstract? Philosophical discussion or setting up chairs? Details or overview?
- Is the person more interested in getting a job done quickly or analyzing a problem?
- Is the person more "planful with mind on the future" or more "present in the moment"?

PERSONALITY: MORE EXAMPLES

- Does the person enjoy methodical or creative work?
- Does the person bore easily? Get frustrated with challenge easily?
- Which does the person like less: structure or chaos?
- Does the person come off to others as brusque or gentle? Patient or impatient? Thoughtful or impulsive? Decisive or not?
- Does the person prefer tight schedules or lots of autonomy on finish times?

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LIFE EXPERIENCES

- What people have gone through may help them with specific tasks
- Example: if someone has a diagnosis of breast cancer, it may be helpful to have someone else who's been through that to talk with
- Experience informs and influences the match, but isn't determinative
  - Passions, competencies, and personality may limit whether or how to apply the experience

EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLY RELEVANT LIFE EXPERIENCES

- Family background, religious background, educational experience, vocational experience, volunteer experience elsewhere and at the Ethical Society
- Specific experience: Parenting a child with special needs, losing a loved one, caring for an aging parent, job loss
- What cultures the person has lived in
- Where (and how) the person has found meaning in the past

SUPPORT

After Recruiting / Engaging

SUPPORT

- More guidance and support at the start
- Evaluate regularly to know when to support
  - Evaluate success of *goals* and the *match*, rather than evaluating a person
  - Is the person happy and learning? (Enthusiasm)
  - Is the task being accomplished? (Effectiveness)

SUPPORT

- Support will vary by motivations of volunteer
  - Comfort / ease
  - Stretching / learning / growing
  - Autonomy
- What does the volunteer need?
  - Ask the volunteer
  - Encourage volunteers to ask

SUPPORT

- Micromanaging is not support
  - Micromanaging will discourage volunteers
  - Micromanaging is not mentoring
- Completely "on their own"
  is not support
  - Communicate expectations
  - Communicate whether they're being met

SUPPORT

Instead:
- Coaching
- Mentoring
- Partnering
- Training
- Shared task / different focus
- Delegating

PUTTING THE IDEAS TO WORK

What Next?

PUTTING THE IDEAS TO WORK

- Where does your volunteer program work best?
- Where do you most need to focus in the next 6 months?

Evaluation
Support
Engagement
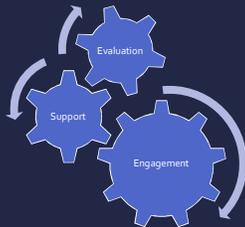
PUTTING THE IDEAS TO WORK

- Which parts of engagement are you doing well?
- What support can you offer that you are not now offering?
- What are some ways you can evaluate goals and matches without evaluating/judging persons?

Evaluation
Support
Engagement

The End