You Make the Difference Initiative

Create Your Volunteer Outreach Plan

Purpose:

Now that you've built momentum with your grasstops and grassroots work, it's time to intentionally design your outreach plan. A clear plan will help you recruit, engage, and retain volunteers by knowing exactly who you're reaching, how you're reaching them, and what success looks like.

Step 1: Define What You Need

Break your volunteer needs into three categories:

- Specialized Volunteers:

  (Example: bookkeeping, marketing, legal advice, technical support)

  - What specific skill is needed?
  - How much time is required?
  - Is it project-based or ongoing?

- Preferred Volunteers:

  (Example: people with related skills who need minimal training)

  - What general skills are preferred?
  - How much time is needed?
  - What support can you offer?
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- General Volunteers:

  (Example: event helpers, parking assistants, ticket takers)

  - How many people do you need?
  - What physical requirements are involved (standing, lifting, etc.)?

Step 2: Build Your Target List

- Who do we know that fits the specialized or preferred categories?
- Who do our contacts know that could help?
- Which businesses, service clubs, churches, or groups can help us recruit general volunteers?

Tip: Assign board members or leaders to approach people they know personally.

Step 3: Plan Your Approach

- Specialized Volunteers:
  - Use personalized, relational outreach.
  - Clearly explain expectations and value exchange.
- Preferred Volunteers:
  - Combine relational outreach and targeted postings.
- General Volunteers:
  - Use flyers, Facebook posts, newsletters, and public announcements.

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Step 4: Communicate Clearly

When asking someone to volunteer:

- Be specific about the time, task, and commitment.
- Describe the value they are providing.
- Share why it matters personally and to the community.

Step 5: Over-Recruit Slightly

- Plan for 10–15% extra volunteers to account for no-shows.

Quick Outreach Planning Notes

Specialized Volunteer Targets:

Preferred Volunteer Targets:

General Volunteer Outreach Ideas (Flyers, Posts, Partners):

Recognition or Value Exchange Offers:

Who Will Reach Out to Each Person:

Reminder:

A written outreach plan ensures you stay intentional, focused, and successful.Your volunteers are ready — you just have to ask them the right way!

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