



Volunteer Engagement Tool Kit

Volunteers and your engagement with them will determine the success of your Total Resource Campaign.

You should print out that statement and tack it onto your computer monitor, the fridge in the break room, the side of the copier, and anywhere else your staff will routinely be during the weeks of the Campaign. These are important words.

Look at them again.

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Not how well you choose your sponsorship inventory, though that is important. Not whether or not you plan exciting Reward Sessions with great speakers and sought-after prizes, though all of those are also important.

It is the volunteers who will drive your Campaign. They are, after all, the ones who are doing the asking, doing the securing of your new sponsorships. They are the hands and feet of this TRC. And you, as Chamber staff, need to care for those hands and feet if they are to serve you well. In an ideal (and successful) world, it is a symbiotic relationship.

The Best and the Most Challenging

The work you will do with volunteers may easily be the most rewarding and the most challenging work of the entire TRC. Volunteer motivation and engagement cannot be boiled down to a single – or even multiple – checklists. Volunteers are people who have unique reasons for being involved in the TRC and unique goals for what they hope to get out of the Campaign personally.

Checklists work for setting up Reward Sessions. They do not work for meeting the needs of people. You need to look at each volunteer as unique and valuable, whether you have 40 volunteers or 80.

Get to know your volunteers.

Determine what motivates each volunteer and from that, see what incentives you can provide that volunteer that works alongside his or her motivation.

Do that for each and every volunteer, and you will have a successful Campaign every year. But you have to do that every year because people, unlike numbers, are fluid and change. What motivated your top producer last year may not motivate him or her this year because changes may have occurred in life to cause a shift in desires.

Know your volunteers.

Start at Home.

Before you can begin being a really great volunteer mentor, you need to start in-house. Understand that your most successful volunteer liaison may not be your top staff members. It may simply be someone who has that particular skill set. Your CEO/president obviously still needs to be actively involved with the volunteers, but you can also involve your entire staff.

Start with a SWAT analysis of your staff. Consider doing an online personality survey such as a Myers-Briggs Personality Test.

Take the results and consider who will best work closely with volunteers. Utilize all of the tools in your toolbox. That includes all of your staff. This process is not about egos but about people, about doing the very best possible for your Chamber and community.

Make a Permanent Record

Do you remember when you were young and you worried the things you did would go into your 'Permanent Record?' Make one of those for your volunteers. Keep it any way you prefer.

- Use index cards in a card holder
- Create an Excel file
- Make an entire Volunteer database

Whatever format is easiest for you and your staff is the one that is best for your Chamber. But keep something that lists basic volunteer information. But then build upon that with key pieces of information that might be helpful. Eventually, you will know all of your volunteers so well that you won't need prompts. But at first, this will help everyone.

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You didn't forget that, did you? Remember that everything regarding volunteer engagement stems from that.

You've gotten your staff involved and determined who will be your campaign manager working with your volunteers (you will ALL work with volunteers, but this person will work with them more closely), and you understand how to make a cheat sheet to get everyone started in remembering those little details.

Now comes the part that there really isn't a checklist or a cheat sheet for... you simply have to engage your volunteers.

Volunteer engagement will be the most difficult thing you do in this Campaign.

It will also pay the biggest rewards. Do not shirk from doing this work. Chambers that intentionally seek to do this well have totals that show that intentionality.

We all want to matter.

Love your volunteers. Don't just say that. Show it. Know them by name when you speak with them on the phone, when they walk into a room.

Learn what matters to them and what drives them in their lives and thus, in this TRC. And find out what incentives drive them. Help them to succeed personally, and you will be helping the TRC to succeed.

Show them by the way you respond to them that what they are doing in the TRC matter to you and to the TRC as a whole. Love your volunteers.

Be mindful of the rules.

Each Chamber makes their own rules for the TRC, for how incentives are given, for what the requirements are and for how prizes are awarded. Be careful of the rules you make and be sure to follow them once they are in place.

Remember that there are no secrets. People will talk, and everyone will know about any secret deals you make to avoid the rules. Situations like that will be demoralizing to your volunteers who are working to earn those incentives according to the rules.

Don't do anything you wouldn't want on the front page of the paper.

Skipping the rules for some people - whether it's the cousin of your Board President or the bank president's son who is a volunteer but who hasn't sold anything to date - will tell those working according to the rules that they don't matter and that you don't love all volunteers equally. Those are the opposite messages of what you want to be sending. They're all business decisions.

Involve the community.

The more well-rounded your volunteer base, the better. Try to involve as much of your community leadership as possible. If your volunteers see that your community leadership has a vested stake in the success of the Chamber, it will assure them that what they are doing matters to the future of their community.

Find those individual motivators.

If you have a volunteer who is not performing at his or her very best, consider what or who might motivate them. Consider incentives outside the original structure.

Do you have an entire team that seems to be struggling? Does the owner of the company sponsoring their team own a cabin at the lake? A box at the local NFL stadium? Approach that owner about offering the entire team a day at the owner's home at the lake or an opportunity to watch a game from the box at the stadium if they collectively reach a certain goal by a designated date.

Do you have one particular volunteer who is very interested in governmental affairs? Is there a political debate being staged in your town that you have tickets to a private meeting with the candidates? Offer him a ticket if he is able to sell a certain amount by a require date.

These are times when it is important for Chamber staff to know two things and know them well.

1) Know your volunteers. This is where loving your volunteers comes into play. You have to know them individually and know what motivates them. Be able to see how you can give them additional incentives that will appeal to each individual.

2) Know your Chamber members and Board members. You have to be aware of the non-cash awards available to you. You don't want to have to increase your TRC budget to offer these additional incentives. In order to do these things, you simply need to be aware of what is available within your membership. And then, be willing to ask.

Additional incentive planning.

Plan for these options when you begin your Campaign. Contact people within your Chamber that you feel like have items that would be good non-cash awards and go ahead and secure these things before the TRC ever begins.

Think about the businesses that are members. Think about the CEOs and the owners and what their personal holdings might be. Consider experiences such as:

- A round of golf at an exclusive golf club
- A flight on a CEO's private jet
- A weekend at the bank president's condo in the Bahamas
- Dinner at the Chef's Table at the exclusive new restaurant in town

Try to think of things that are exclusive but that might also allow volunteers to do some name dropping at work and in their social circles. Remember the hierarchy of volunteers - some volunteers just want access to a group of business leaders that they might not otherwise have.

Promote your volunteers.

Give your volunteers all the good press possible. Send positive reports about your volunteers to your local media outlets. Use social media to talk about their accomplishments (always noting the business they work for and never mentioning the incentives they have received).

Encourage a volunteer to take a selfie with their business representatives when they sign contacts for sponsorships. They can send those to you for you to post on your social media. That will give recognition to both your volunteers and your sponsoring businesses.

By that same token, if a volunteer hand-delivers a contract, take a selfie with that volunteer. Post that and tag the volunteer's business so the photo will show on that business page as well. Give that volunteer all the public kudos possible.

Do a special TRC Wrap-up Newsletter when the Campaign has concluded and use plenty of pictures of your top producing volunteers. Be sure their businesses and CEOs or bosses get copies.

Recognizing your volunteers

There are multiple ways for acknowledging your volunteers and making sure they get the recognition they deserve. At the same time, recognition can encourage other volunteers to reach their goals. Some ways to make sure your volunteers know their efforts are appreciated include:

- Weekly spot in your E-newsletter
- Weekly spot on your website
- Press releases and photos in the local business journal
- Recognition at ALL chamber meetings that occur during the TRC
- Team and corporate photos released to above media outlets
- Corporate involvement is sometimes recognized on billboards if you can get a “deal”
- And of course, social media is ripe with promotional opportunity.
 - Weekly top 3 volunteers
 - Weekly top volunteer business snapshot
 - Weekly volunteer “contest” winner – top 5 questions



Weekly spot on your website



Twitter announcements of top volunteers

Recognize accomplishments for the Chamber

Keep in mind that we should never mention the trip or trip winners in media/promotions. We only mention what volunteers have accomplished for the Chamber. We want to keep the focus on the impact that these volunteers are having on the Chamber and the community.

Include the names of businesses in recognitions

While it is important to recognize the achievements of individual volunteers, we need to include company names at every opportunity. Maybe the volunteer is a sole proprietor or maybe he or she works at large employer. Either way, it is important to recognize the businesses that are a part of the TRC.

Involve your Board!

As important as public recognition is (and it is!), don't forget the power of personal words of gratitude. One of the major motivators for your volunteers is getting your Board to show up at your events and say "thanks." And that doesn't cost anything!

Love your volunteers.

This keeps coming around, but it is essential. When the Campaign is over, your work with volunteers is not. Chambers that see strong connections with repeat volunteers and strong success amongst those volunteers are those that continue to build relationships with volunteers throughout the year.

Make a quick call or send an email when you see a volunteer's name in the local newspaper or on social media as having won an award or received a promotion. Send a birthday message.

Send a news article you think a volunteer would find interesting (because, remember, you have already developed a knowledge of this volunteer).

Make people feel special. If you love your volunteers, they will love you in return and will want to help you. They will want to be part of what you and the Chamber are doing because they will feel good about being involved.

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