



Information Sheet

Recruiting Volunteers Online

Why Use this Resource?

Online volunteer recruiting is growing in popularity, particularly as broadband has become more widely available. Community organisations have attracted individuals with web skills, and have looked to the web as a way of promoting their volunteer opportunities.

[Links to National Standards for Involving Volunteers - No. 8 Continuous Improvement]



Prior to 2000, traditional forms of promoting job opportunities (paid and volunteer) dominated. Newspapers and magazines were still the primary method of advertising opportunities; and many of these were done via agencies - either recruitment agencies for paid employment of volunteer resource centres for volunteer opportunities.

But the emergence of widespread internet access; coupled with organisations investing less in HR meant that online recruiting became a cheaper and sometimes more effective option.

Over the last decade, online recruiting, particularly for paid positions has become increasingly sophisticated. Specialist recruiting sites like www.seek.com.au offer a range of options to help manage enquiries and track applications. Organisations are using their own website to promote jobs; often as a way of positioning themselves - and job seekers are taking advantage of this. In a survey conducted by the Society for Human Resource Management in the US; 96% of people surveyed looked for jobs online (up from 45% 3 years earlier). The trends are similar in Australia; with many people (irrespective of age) turning to the internet when looking for employment opportunities.

The use of the internet as a recruitment strategy has become increasingly popular with organisations looking for volunteers in the last 3 – 4 years; particularly as broadband has become more widely available. As nonprofit organisations have attracted people with web skills, or younger volunteers, they have looked more and more to the web as a way of promoting volunteer opportunities. Most started by first promoting on their websites, or on bulletin boards. Later, volunteer linking sites like Volunteering Qld and GoVolunteer have made it possible to not only promote jobs but also facilitate direct linking.

While statistics suggest this is beneficial; internationally direct linking has seen a 50% increase in volunteer enquiries for roles; it is still early days in Australia. Furthermore, recruiting for volunteers on the web is not as straightforward as it is for organisations that use the web to recruit for paid employees. More constraints exist, and the target market that you are aiming at is much more diverse than paid employment.

Not all nonprofit organisations plan ahead when recruiting volunteers; but having a simple recruitment plan that details the types of volunteer roles you have available (including whether they are ongoing or short-term) and the skills, motivations and locations of people you are hoping to attract can often tell you whether recruiting on the web for those jobs is going to be effective or not. When you plan, also consider where online you will promote the opportunity – on your website if you have one, on a linking site like Volunteering Qld or GoVolunteer, on another organisation's website, even on a social networking site like MySpace or Facebook.



Volunteering Qld

Volunteering has never been so easy

Information Sheet

Recruiting Volunteers Online



Common sense says that older volunteers (late 60's and above typically) do not necessarily access the internet as readily as younger volunteers. Jobs that might target older volunteers might get a better response using other avenues. While this means you shouldn't invest a lot of energy in promoting these roles on the web, don't disregard it altogether. For very little effort, posting a job on your website or a linking site still gets the message out, and you never know who might come across it.

Having a screening process to help you 'weed' out unsuitable applications is essential. Ensuring that you have detailed this clearly in your job description is vital - but sometimes no matter what you do, you will have people who apply who may not meet your requirements.

Develop an Effective Recruitment Strategy

- Basic access to the internet
- Develop volunteer roles
- Well written job descriptions
- Designated email account for queries/applications
- Designated person(s) to respond to queries/applications
- Effective interview and screening process to 'weed' out unsuitable applications

'Golden Rule' of Recruitment

Do **NOT** recruit volunteers online until you have well-defined, written volunteer assignment descriptions, and you have an immediate next step for people who call or email about the opportunities.

Using Volunteering Qld's Service

GET YOURSELF REGISTERED!

- ◆ Log on to www.volunteeringqld.org.au
- ◆ Click on "Nonprofits"
- ◆ Click on "Register" to access information about our volunteer linking service
- ◆ Click on the "Register Now" link
- ◆ Complete & submit the registration application
- ◆ Approval is emailed to you
- ◆ Upload your jobs and monitor your applications

Applications are subject to an approval process to ensure that you are a legitimate community organisation. It takes two business days to process.



Volunteering Qld

Volunteering has never been so easy