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▶ The Magic Formula for Volunteer Recruitment & Success ◀

DESCRIPTION:

Let's be honest...there is no magic formula. Thankfully, there are several steps and strategies that can be implemented that could enhance the recruitment and retention of Children's Ministry volunteers. This fun interacting workshop will include the latest research, motivating ideas, and sympathy (We mean prayers) for all who work with volunteers.

This topic is personal and we were thankful for the opportunity to study and learn the latest strategies and research because we knew our recruitment and retention of volunteers needed to change.

Various methods used pre-COVID to recruit:

1. *Bulletins*
2. *Announcements made in Sunday Worship Service*
3. *Sunday School Classes*
4. *Emails*
5. *Phone Trees*
6. *Social Media*



COVID has dramatically impacted volunteer base needed to run a successful children's ministry. Many of us will need to rebuild our volunteer base.

Invite potential volunteers to a **MISSION** not to a position or job

As churches we have the most compelling mission of the world. We're the collective body of Jesus, accomplishing His purposes in the world. If we aren't inviting volunteers from that perspective, of course it will be difficult to get people to join the cause.



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1. Pray for the Lord to provide volunteers – Our ministry is ultimately in God’s hands...He is the one who provides volunteers. (Matthew 9:37-38)

2. Do you have a clean understanding of the ministry’s mission and vision? Are you speaking to potential volunteers in a way they able to catch that vision?

3. Use words in recruiting that invite people to see the lives they are impacting with the actual role/position presented as almost an after thought.

- For example, “How would you like to brighten the day of a new family?”
- For example, “Imagine the gift you offer to a parent to worship in the church service without being distracted by their kids.”

4. In recruiting, volunteers need to see the impact the ministry has on kids, parents, and other volunteers.

5. Be sensitive when approaching people today about volunteering, sadly many feel abused or taken advantage of.

6. When recruiting our emphasis should be on helping potential volunteers see that serving is a privilege.

7. The things we each say and do make an impact on what kids and families think of both God and His people, the church. Serving makes an eternal impact.

The most effective method to recruit is still to **PERSONALLY** invite someone.

1. Don’t use apologetic words. If you believe your ministry makes an eternal impact, then believe that others will want to be part of helping make the same eternal impact. - People want to make a difference!

- May I ask
- I feel terrible asking you this



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- I'll help you if you help me
- I don't normally ask for help
- It's just a tiny thing

2. Ask other leaders to also commit to asking someone in their sphere of influence to become part of the ministry team.

- Describe a way the team has benefited you
- Describe what you contribute to the team
- Paint a word picture of what they could contribute what they could bring to the team
- Connect them with a next step
- Introduce them to another leader
- Invite the potential volunteer to shadow a leader for a Sunday to see what an amazing impact they could have
- It is important we broaden our recruitment base by encouraging volunteers to recommend and invite others to volunteer
- Encourage leaders to be praying along with us for the Lord to send more volunteers

3. Create Low Risk Entry Positions

- Trial run to see if this position may be right for them
- Having a process that volunteers follow to onboard

(a) Make sure all leaders know onboarding process

(b) Complete process should be streamlined for ease of volunteering – Ministry Safe Application and onboarding material all at one location or meeting

- Short term commitment
- Flexible commitment for family and work situations
- Easy off boarding



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4. Have a plan – Test drive various methods of recruitment

- Onboarding
- Sign-up – Emphasize mission not just weekly responsibilities
- Volunteer led sign-ups
- Online volunteer portal
- Social Media
- Newcomers class
- Small groups

KEEP your volunteers

1. Helping volunteers belong is essential in retaining volunteers.

- You need all kinds of personality types in every ministry for many reasons
- Build community by having common language to ministry.
- Leaders need to ensure their team hears about life changes in children who continue into youth and adult ministries. Provide stories of their impact by sharing growth and major spiritual decisions with team.

2. Create clear meaningful wins & goals

- Create daily goal focus for individuals and groups

1. *Examples of individual goal: "Give every child back to parents with a fresh diaper."*

2. *Example of group goal: "Your goal is for every parent to be greeted by name today."*

3. Presenting a clear weekly group goal or an individual goal helps each person to understand and achieve better.

4. Setting volunteers up for success:

- Have a consistent routine and let volunteers know in advance if any changes are being implemented.
- Provide necessary classroom supplies (ex. Resources and teaching curriculum, helping them prep)



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- Give leaders ownership over areas. Allow them to be decision makers within their area.

5. Encourage ministry volunteers:

- Talk with them as opportunity arises – care about their lives
- Pray for and with volunteers
- Celebrate and mourn significant moments in volunteers' lives: Birthday, death of a parent, birth of a child, etc.
- Offer words of encouragement

6. Create a culture that evokes pride – Herzberg Motivation Theory

A. Hygiene – Basic need must be met before volunteers will feel pride in culture. Ministry leads must ensure the following questions can be answered with a positive response from a volunteer in your team.

- Is church a place they can be proud of?
- Is the team one they can be proud of?
- Make sure there are not any teammates bringing down morale of the whole. Negative volunteers bring the whole team down.
- Is the logistics too complicated to serve or do you have unrealistic expectations of volunteers?
- Is your leadership friendly? Does your team see you as a good communicator?
- Are your volunteers visible, wanted, or even really needed?

B. Motivators

- Individuality – Are they allowed to bring something unique to the team?
- Life changes – Do they get to see or hear about life changes? Emphasize how they contributed to that change.
- Innovation -Do they have ownership of process and freedom in decision making?
- Evaluations – Allow your leaders time and a process to bring ideas, suggestions, and weaknesses without judgment.



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Pass the Fire to **NEW LEADERS**

1. Look for YOUR NEXT LEADER – Are you looking to continually train someone to fill your shoes?

2. Are you looking at things futuristically or just surviving?

3. Recognize that problems magnify if new leaders are not being developed.

- Growth, morale, improvement of volunteers all stifled
- Ministry does not improve
- Losing a key member effects morale of all

4. Rethink your ministry by asking the following questions.

- What if I had ½ budget?
- Shorter timeline to accomplish a task?
- Doubled your goal?
- Are there programs that should be removed?
- Am I networking to seek innovative ideas being used elsewhere?
- If you could rebuild, throwing everything away, what would it look like?
- In rebuilding ask yourself, “What would we not do we are currently doing? What should we do we are not doing?”
- If we had unlimited resources, what would we do differently?
- What are my steps to make improvements?

5. Produce the Highlight Reel – Provide times of celebrating together!

- Host an event outside Sunday AM for volunteers
- Gifts
- Training
- Preservice rally
- Platform for bragging on your volunteers



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7. Motivate new volunteers

- Before they start, make sure volunteers do not have any unanswered questions.
- Make sure all questions are answered before their first arrival.
- The 2nd and 3rd time check in with volunteer to ensure they feel part of the team.
- Is there a clear feedback loop?
- Provide real time walkthrough or training of positions BEFORE they take over area or leadership role.
- Provide a clear framework of their duties and positions BEFORE they begin volunteering.

8. Protect your volunteers from obstacles

- Themselves

1. *Burnout*
2. *Overstretching*
3. *Entitlement – More prestigious job desired or is this beneath them?*
4. *Be open and honest with people*

- Critics – protect your volunteers from unsolicited opinion

- Other Volunteers

1. *Bad volunteers start to feel entitlement*
2. *Good volunteers leave team*
3. *Your influence as leader shrinks*
4. *Team becomes discouraged*
5. *Bad attitudes drive church members away*
6. *Hurts spiritual growth*
7. *Ultimately reflects poorly on Jesus and HIS Church*

“Volunteering isn’t about what I can do for God; it is accomplishing something with God” - (The Volunteer Church by Leith Anderson and Jill Fox)

Works Cited:

Anderson, Leith and Jill Fox. The Volunteer Church. Mobilizing Your Congregation for Growth and Effectiveness. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015. Print.
Young, Jason and Jonathan Malm. The Volunteer Effect: How Your Church Can Find, Train, and Keep Volunteers Who Make a Difference. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2020. Print.



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