

The Boomer Generation: An Elite Volunteer Force

Presented by

Lorie Coker, PhD, CVA – Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Richmond

Katie Campbell, CVA – Skye Consulting

2015 Virginia Volunteerism and Service Conference

Today's Session

- The Boomer generation: Who, What, Why?
- Factors for success in attracting and supporting Boomer volunteers
- Scenario discussion: What If...?
- Q & A throughout

Boomers: Now ages 51 - 69

- Born 1946 - 1964
- “Baby Boomers”
- “The Me Generation”
- “The Pepsi Generation”

- Civil Rights Movement, Assassinations
- Woodstock
- The Cold War, Viet Nam
- John Glenn, Moon landing

Core values:

- Make a difference
- Work is my identity
- Personal growth
- Health & wellness
- Community involvement
- Optimism
- Social networks

Implications for behavior:

- Participation is expected
- Consensus leadership
- Do not suffer in silence – speak up
- Workaholic

Why We Want Boomers as Volunteers

- They are willing to take on substantial roles and projects.
- Many have the skills to help us solve major organizational problems.
- They can lead us to many other people and resources.
- They will be highly passionate about our mission.
- They are healthier than preceding generations.
- They are more educated than their parents, especially females.
- They will invest themselves in an “encore career” with nonprofits.

What Boomers Want From a Volunteer Experience

- To utilize their workplace skills (especially males)
- Lots of choices and flexibility
- Opportunities to leave a social legacy
- Freedom to make it their own
- Alignment with personal values

Example: Kiwanis Club Survey

- Put their talents to use, not “busy” work.
- Provide professional or managerial assistance to a nonprofit.
- Continue building legacy by building on skills, knowledge, & interests.
- Volunteer in teams or groups on a rotating schedule.
- Organized, clear expectations, and see the benefit of their contributions.

10 Best Practices for Engaging Boomers & New Generations of Volunteers

- Understand volunteers' deep-seated need to have impact. Use that understanding in all facets of interaction.
- Focus initial conversations on learning the prospective volunteer's passions, desire to learn, and how your organization might connect to the impact he/she wants to have.
- Be clear about the wide choice of volunteer opportunities in all aspects of the organization's operations.

10 Best Practices for Engaging Boomers & New Generations of Volunteers (cont.)

- Discuss how specific roles/positions align with individual availability, preferences and schedule constraints.
- Identify specific skills and expertise that each new volunteer brings to the organization. (But don't assume...)
- Provide prospective and new volunteers with clear, compelling information about results. Stress the “so what?” aspect of every role.
- Encourage creative thinking wherever possible, and remain willing to try new ideas.

10 Best Practices for Engaging Boomers & New Generations of Volunteers (cont.)

- Be highly visible on the web – both for initial recruiting AND on a continual basis for current members.
- Identify high potential members and cultivate them to take on additional responsibility. Share leadership tasks liberally!
- Re-frame volunteer recognition to respond to what members value. Ask them!

Adapted from work done by Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration (MAVA), 2010 www.mavanetwork.org

Co-creating New Volunteer Roles

Source: ([Boomer Volunteer Engagement](#), by Jill Friedman Fixler)

- ✓ *Identify current competencies*
- ✓ *Agree on goals, benchmarks, desired outcomes*
- ✓ *List available resources*
- ✓ *Identify additional needs, if any*
- ✓ *Decide on how you will communicate and share updates*
- ✓ *Set a time for revisiting the plan.*

Factors for Success

Recruitment:

- Develop ways to connect them to your mission
- Talk about specific problems & challenges with which your organization needs help
- Describe the potential impact they can make
- Emphasize the ways in which you offer flexibility
- Emphasize the degree of independence you can offer
- Re-think your interview questions
- Ask them to recruit others they are connected to in the community

Factors for Success

Orientation/Expectations:

- Find out what they already know
- Provide information about how nonprofits work if they don't have prior experience
- Include an opportunity to meet top management
- Make it interactive
- Be ready and organized

Factors for Success

Risk Management:

- Minimize the administrative “hassle” as much as possible
- Explain why procedures are needed

Factors for Success

Supervision:

- Avoid hierarchy, support collaborative teamwork
- Maintain a high degree of professionalism
- Delegate authority as well as responsibility
- View them as “consultants”

Factors for Success

Retention:

- Invite feedback often
- Explore “what next” together
- Offer exposure to various parts of the organization
- Welcome involvement of older children and aging parents
- Maintain sensitivity to personal life changes

What If...?

(Scenarios for table discussion)

Takeaway Ideas / Q & A

Thoughts?

Questions?

Thank You!

- Lorie Coker: lcoker@bgcmr.org
- Katie Campbell: ktquiraing@Comcast.net