

Members are likely to develop and sustain commitment to goal when...

Additional Information

- ◆ They are clear about the mission, values, and goals of community service and can see them in action. It is important that supervisors not only share information about community service, but also model the principles and values associated with the movement.
- ◆ They feel appreciated for their contributions. Volunteers usually value a direct supervisor's approval more than that of any other person on staff. Letting them know that their diligence, contributions, service, and positive attitudes really matter can go a long way in developing and sustaining motivation.
- ◆ They are competent and confident. Performance assessment, praise, and constructive feedback help identify problems early and build confidence and competence. Over time, volunteers begin to feel more and more capable.
- ◆ They have influence in developing their roles in the program. Influence creates ownership and ownership builds commitment. Allow members and volunteers to participate actively in the planning processes that determine their roles and responsibilities.
- ◆ Their personal goals are met. Get to know your members as individuals and try to understand what motivates each one. Use that information in assigning work so that both program and personal goals are met.

For more information on building your leadership skills or getting involved in a leadership role on campus, please contact the Dean of Students office. The Student Organization Area can assist in providing additional advisement to the needs of your club/organization. The Student Leadership Institute provides opportunities such as workshops and a University Leadership Conference. Feel free to contact us for any leadership development or support that you may need. We look forward to hearing from you.

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STUDENT AFFAIRS

Managing
Volunteers

Dean of Students

Strategies for effective supervision of volunteers

Supervisors wear many hats--communicator, evaluator, planner, team builder, coach, mentor, partnership builder--to name a few. The following are some strategies we have learned in working with volunteer supervisors that can make the complex job of pulling all of these pieces together to effectively supervise a program a little more manageable:

Challenge: Holding members and volunteers accountable for outcomes while encouraging them to grow as individuals.

Strategies: Set clear goals and objectives with each volunteer at the beginning of their service year/semester. Discussions should focus on the establishment of realistic personal development objectives that are clearly linked to the overall project objectives. In other words, what skills will they develop as they work to get things done?

Establish regular time for structured member/volunteer reflection. After a significant period of work time or after a specific service activity, allow them the time to reflect on questions such as: How did my service help to meet the objectives of the program? In what ways did I improve myself? What skills did I learn or develop? After members and volunteers

have had time to reflect, provide feedback to them on their performance. Remember to praise good performance.

Challenge: Keeping members and volunteers motivated.

Strategies: Afford members and volunteers opportunities to be a part of developing their roles in project activities. Ownership builds commitment. Get to know your members and volunteers individually by having them complete a survey or hold a discussion on such topics as what motivates them. Focus the discussion on issues of self-esteem, social interaction, need for personal recognition, and team affiliation. Once members and volunteers clarify what they want to get out of service, assign them work that they regard as valuable and that will help them achieve their personal goals.

Challenge: Juggling multiple roles.

Strategies: Plan at least one week ahead and then make daily adjustments. Allow time to take care of unexpected or urgent tasks. Be careful not to over-schedule. Set aside a portion of each day to see members and volunteers. They need time to meet with their supervisor but that doesn't mean you should be available all the time. Tasks often don't get done because of frequent interruptions. Delegate tasks to others based on project goals and their personal goals.

Challenge: Establishing a cohesive team in a multi-site environment.

Strategies: Schedule regular member/volunteer gatherings (at least once a month or every two months) at one of the project sites. These gatherings should include both a one-day community service activity designed to foster interaction and team building, and small group training designed to develop a sense of team identity. Gatherings that celebrate project accomplishments and recognize individual and group achievements are also important. Encourage members and volunteers who work near each other to collaborate on different project activities.

Motivating and sustaining members in community service

One of the most difficult tasks confronting community service supervisors is helping volunteers develop and sustain a commitment to service throughout a program year. Member motivation rises and falls at critical points within a program year. Can we realistically do anything about keeping members motivated? The answer is "yes," and we have developed a list of strategies that supervisors may wish to consider when helping members build and sustain motivation.