



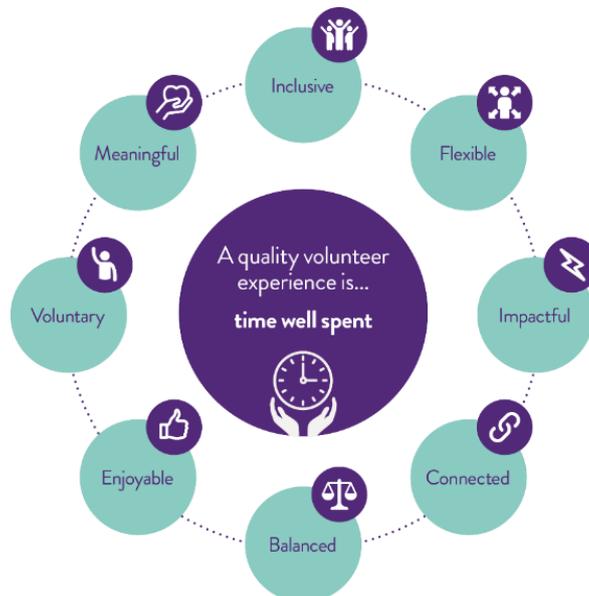
Creating a Friendly Volunteer Environment

1. Introduction

Keeping volunteers can often be as much of a challenge to volunteer involving organisations as finding them in the first place. Creating an environment that is volunteer friendly, is important to ensure that your volunteers feel welcome and want to stay.

2. What makes a quality volunteer experience?

According to the NVCO *Time Well Spent* report the following aspects have to be present to ensure a quality experience for your volunteer:



Inclusive: Make an effort to make a new volunteer feel welcome. Provide them with all the information that they need, introduce them to the team, answer and anticipate any questions they might have. See information sheet 6 *Diversifying your Volunteer Base* to look at how you can ensure your volunteer opportunities are welcoming to everyone.

Flexible: Volunteers want to be able to volunteer on their own terms, this can be hard for organisations to understand and accommodate, but it is an important

principle in creating opportunities that are valuable to new and existing volunteers. Think about how different work areas can be broken down into smaller roles and be flexible to the needs of the volunteer. This will give greater flexibility to both the volunteer and the organisation. It will open the doors to more diverse volunteers, who will stay for longer and tell others about volunteering with your organisation.

Impactful: Volunteers want to know that what they are doing is making a difference. The NVCO report highlighted that society is not aware of the contribution that is made by volunteering. Let's start with our own volunteers. Record the hours that are given by the volunteers and equate them to targets met, people helped etc. This is a great way of showing volunteers the impact they are making.

Connected: Volunteering allows people to connect with others and feel part of a community. Make sure your volunteers get together. It could be by inducting volunteers in pairs or groups. Perhaps you will provide volunteer meetings and socials, where volunteers are given opportunities to network with their peers. Don't undervalue this in the overall experience of your volunteers.

Balanced: Volunteers report that undue process put them off volunteering. Have a look at your current application process – can you make it easier? Can you provide support around essential training e.g. safeguarding to help make it easier for you volunteers?

Enjoyable: Volunteers want to enjoy what they are doing and feel good about the impact they are making. Take time to find out what your volunteers needs and preferences are. You may need to adapt the role slightly to the volunteer to suit their likes, interests and passions. Create time for socials and make volunteering fun. Ongoing challenges, competition and games can all help to make the volunteering experience more enjoyable.

Voluntary: Volunteers give their time, energy and skills freely, but it can be easy to forget this when there is a job to be done. Remember that volunteers are not paid members of staff, they should not have to carry the pressure or expectation of a paid member of staff.

Meaningful: Ensure the message of the work that you do is understood by your volunteers. Volunteers want to give their time to organisations that resonate with their lives, interests and priorities, so making sure that your volunteers know the difference they are making is important in retaining volunteers.

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