



10 Tips for Recruiting Volunteers

1. The first person to talk to is yourself!
 - ❖ Disregard stereotypes, don't lie, don't diminish the job, don't apologize, don't beg.
2. Ask one-to-one, face-to-face. It's the best method.
 - ❖ People are more likely to volunteer when someone they know has asked them.
3. Be enthusiastic!
 - ❖ The best recruiter is someone who enjoys what they're doing, and who values the work of the organization – share your enthusiasm.
4. Understand the job for which you are recruiting.
 - ❖ Have a job description prepared that outlines the purpose of the job, its responsibilities, and how to get support. Provide a contact name.
5. Be able to explain why you've chosen that person.
 - ❖ Know the skills, attitudes, and knowledge required for the job and match the right person to the right job.
6. Be explicit about "what's in it for them."
 - ❖ Try to put yourself in their shoes. What needs does this job satisfy for this particular volunteer?
7. Ask!
 - ❖ Oftentimes, people don't volunteer because no one has asked them.
 - ❖ Try the following positive approaches:
 - "I have an opportunity for you..."
 - "I've heard so much about your skills..."
 - "We could really use your talents..."
8. Answer questions honestly.
 - ❖ Answering questions demonstrates your interest in their concerns. Even if the individual says no to you, you've told the story of your organization. This will establish the groundwork for future involvement or a referral to others.

9. Link recruits with a specific project and a personal contact.
 - ❖ The goal is to get someone involved while their interest and enthusiasm are high. Many people volunteer and then aren't contacted. This hurts the credibility of the organization.
 - ❖ A specific project is the "hook" to get people involved. They are learning the language and culture of the organization. Don't have them observing for the first year.
 - ❖ A personal call from the committee chair (or from someone with whom they'll be working) makes the newcomer feel welcome. As well, consider assigning a mentor to watch over the new recruit and to ease them into the organization.

10. Don't promise what you can't deliver.
 - ❖ Enticing new recruits with offers that can't be delivered on will only set up a series of expectations which may not be realized and end up making the volunteer resentful.

Content taken from Macnaughton, D. (2008). *How to start a friends of the library group*. Presentation at Ontario Library Association Super Conference, Toronto, ON.