

How to Create a Successful Volunteer Ministry

from ACS Technologies

“Volunteers are not paid – not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless.” Though this quote is anonymous, it is probably safe to say that the person who wrote it was involved in church ministry at the time! Anyone who has led a church ministry will tell you that volunteers are essential. Yet the reality is that church leaders struggle to get the majority of their members involved as volunteers and find it difficult to retain volunteers once they are involved.

Often the most difficult part of building a strong volunteer ministry is knowing where to begin. This article contains excerpts from the ACS Ministry Guide: Raising Your Volunteer Numbers. To read the complete version, please visit www.ideastoimpact.com/volunteering.

Connect Your Members

The members of your church possess a wide variety of knowledge and skills that can be utilized for volunteer ministry. To ensure success, it is best to connect volunteers with ministries that they want to do and can do well. It is essential to gather and organize information about your members in order to match them with appropriate volunteer positions.

Know Your Volunteers

Once volunteers are sorted into different ministry categories, they can be pre-screened and your leaders can inform the volunteer of any steps required to fill a position during that time. For security purposes, extensive background checks should be done. This is true for all potential volunteers, especially those working with children. Neglecting to properly screen individuals could lead to injuries, abuse or devastating lawsuits against the church.

Use the Web to Increase Awareness

Awareness is vital when it comes to getting the right people involved. Church leaders can't help but wonder if they have capable congregation members that are not serving simply because they don't know what is going on. Because of this, you need a way to make volunteers aware of opportunities and make it convenient for them to sign up.

Consider using your church website to post opportunities online. Sending out emails is also a great way to increase awareness. By using a church management system that offers Web-based features, you can allow your leaders to access member information to send out individual or group emails. When sending an email, leaders can simply place a link to the posting site so all members have to do is click the link to view more information about the opportunity.

Strengthen Commitment Through Relationships

Relationships are the lifeblood of a strong volunteer ministry. If volunteers feel encouraged by their church leaders, the ministry will prosper. On the other hand, if volunteers feel disconnected from their leaders or unappreciated by them, the ministry will suffer. People need to be

reminded that they are important. People will be more likely to attend events and will develop a strong sense of loyalty to the ministry if they feel loved and valued.

Develop the Ownership Mentality

The ownership mentality allows a volunteer to place a personal value on the ministry; church leaders need to help volunteers build this mentality. A great way to do this is by having times set apart specifically to discuss your ministry. This could be 30 minutes before ministry begins, or during a team cookout or dinner. No matter the method chosen, if volunteers are given the opportunity to provide their feedback on a ministry they will likely remain more committed to the ministry in the long run.

Make the Move

When churches take an organized approach and use appropriate ministry tools, the volunteer statistics of a church can significantly improve. Let's recap the important steps to increasing volunteer understanding, commitment, and awareness:

- Gather and manage volunteer information and use it to place volunteers in positions where they will thrive
- Screen all of your volunteers
- Use the Web to post volunteer needs and send emails to members
- Give attention to building stronger relationships
- Provide opportunities for feedback and the chance for volunteers to help chart the direction of the ministry

These solutions help to overcome the difficulties faced in the pursuit of effective volunteer ministry. By applying them, you will find yourself leading motivated and committed people who are making the most impact toward the growth of your church.

To get more information about how ACS Technologies® can help you mobilize your members and accomplish your vision, please visit www.acstechnologies.com or call 800-736-7425.

Struggling with Outreach?

How do you **REACH** the people in your community and **RETAIN** the visitors you already have?

Download the ACS ministry guide, **Going Outside the Church Walls**, for ideas and practical solutions!

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