



Managing Volunteers Course

STUDY NOTES

Study Notes

Section 1: Understanding volunteering

- Volunteering has strong roots in both Maori and European societies.
 - A volunteer is 'someone whose work is willingly done, without reward, for the common good'.
 - Volunteering serves an important function across New Zealand society.
 - In New Zealand there are 394 volunteer brigades with a total of just under 8000 volunteers.
 - Voluntary labour and non-profit organisations are important to the New Zealand economy.
 - New Zealand volunteers contribute millions of hours labour each year to various causes.
 - New Zealand has one of the largest not-for-profit sectors in the world.
 - Volunteers possess a vast range of skills and experiences.
 - Understanding what motivates people to volunteer with New Zealand Fire Service (NZFS) will help you recruit, support and retain your volunteers.
 - Research helps NZFS to find out the factors that motivate our volunteers.
 - Understanding what motivates people to volunteer with NZFS will help you recruit, support and retain your volunteers.
 - The results of research conducted by NZFS provide consistent themes for volunteering.
 - Volunteers are demotivated when they feel poorly managed, under valued or exploited.
 - Volunteers appreciate being well organised and managed.
-

Section 2: The professional volunteer manager

- Brigade managers must ensure that volunteers' experiences are as positive as possible.
- Negative experiences by volunteers will reflect poorly on the brigade and NZFS.
- Volunteer managers, including CFOs, require a wide range of key competencies and skills.
- Volunteer managers undertake a number of different roles and tasks as part of their jobs.
- Volunteer managers may assist brigades in recruiting volunteers, and providing them with support and supervision.
- Volunteer managers usually also undertake a range of administrative tasks.
- Volunteer managers need to be clear about their roles and responsibilities.
- Your role description outlines your roles and responsibilities.
- In New Zealand volunteer management is increasingly becoming formalised as an academic and professional discipline.
- The NZFS and AFAC have programmes specifically for managers of volunteers involved in emergency services.
- The basic processes of volunteer management are recruitment, supporting and training volunteers.
- Volunteer managers need to be highly organised, knowledgeable, people-centred and communicative.
- Effective volunteer managers ensure that they are well-informed, and know how to handle volunteers fairly.
- The human aspect of volunteer management can be hugely rewarding.
- It is important for volunteer managers to focus on optimising staff-volunteer relationships.
- Volunteer managers should take their time to develop and grow in their roles.
- Although volunteer managers will undertake a range of different tasks in their role, they should not overstretch themselves.
- New volunteer managers should focus on becoming socially skilled.

Section 3: You, the law and volunteers

- Several pieces of government legislation relate to volunteers.
 - The *Privacy Act* requires NZFS fire stations to safeguard and not misuse the information that they hold about volunteers.
 - Technically, volunteers are not covered as ‘employees’ under the *Employment Relations Act*.
 - However, the concept of ‘being a good employer’ means that organisations may wish to extend the principles of the law to volunteers.
 - The principles of natural justice apply to volunteers just as much as employees when taking action against them.
 - The *Human Rights Act* protects volunteers from unlawful discrimination.
 - The *Health and Safety in Employment Act* makes employers responsible for volunteer’s wellbeing at work.
 - ACC considers accidental injuries sustained during voluntary work as ‘non-work injuries’.
-

Section 4: Good volunteer systems, processes and paperwork

- To prepare for volunteers, the NZFS has effective recruitment, training and management policies and processes in place.
 - Volunteer support officers also provide operational and administrative support services to our volunteer brigades and fire-fighters.
 - The Model Rules of Association ensure NZFS brigades apply a consistent approach to recruiting volunteers.
 - The Standards of Conduct outline the broader philosophic and ethical position of NZFS volunteers.
 - Rights and responsibilities documents specifically state the commitments that the NZFS and volunteers have towards each other.
 - Prospective volunteers need access to information about volunteering with NZFS, how they can get involved and the recruitment process they need to follow.
 - Application forms are an important first step for gaining information about volunteers and assessing their suitability for volunteer roles.
 - Problems associated with unclear roles and expectations can be addressed using role descriptions.
 - The UFBA administers an Accident Assurance Scheme to provide financial assistance to enrolled volunteer members of NZFS Fire Brigades who suffer accidents during approved fire brigade activities.
 - NZFS reimburses volunteers for a range of expenses they may incur.
-

Section 5: Recruiting volunteers

- There are a variety of ways to recruit volunteers.
 - Assessing the needs of a brigade will help you target the message for greater effectiveness.
 - General recruitment methods communicate general information about volunteering with the NZFS to the wider public.
 - Using personal contacts and face to face methods are the most effective ways of recruiting new members.
 - External organisations may also be contracted to recruit volunteers.
 - Often the best recruitment drives use a combination of approaches applied in a purposeful and planned way.
 - It is essential that advertisements for attracting volunteers have a carefully designed and effective recruitment message.
 - Check out the volunteer firefighters website to see the national recruitment message.
 - Marketing and sales strategies are excellent methods for communicating with and attracting potential volunteers.
 - A marketing approach can help organisations better understand the marketplace for volunteers, and subsequently refine their volunteer recruitment processes.
 - Brigades may benefit from recruiting a diverse range of volunteers.
 - Volunteer brigades are heavily reliant on the support of local employers to allow their staff to volunteer.
 - The Employer Recognition Programme allows brigades to say thanks to these employers for their support.
 - Brigades must adhere to the *Human Rights Act* when recruiting volunteers.
-

Section 6: Inducting volunteers

- Induction and On-boarding involves welcoming and initiating new people into the organisation.
 - Engagement is the relative strength of an individual's identification with, and involvement in, and loyalty to a particular organisation or job.
-

Section 7: Training volunteers

- Succession—making sure that there are people suitably trained and ready to fill vacancies in ranks and roles.
 - For more information about volunteer TAPS, see the “Training Procedures for Volunteers” document which is on FireNet. This is a very important document. It sets out how TAPS is managed, delivered and assessed, and what people’s responsibilities are.
 - Training is not a one-off event, but consists of prior training, basic initial training, and ongoing training.
 - Prior training or knowledge may be a prerequisite for some voluntary positions, but remember that expectations should be realistic.
 - Basic initial training follows orientation, and covers essential skills and knowledge.
 - Ongoing training focuses on progressively developing volunteers’ abilities and skills.
 - The brigade training plan will show Station Management System (SMS) tasks and OSM skills, and when TAPS practical courses are scheduled.
 - You do not have to reinvent the wheel. Training materials are available from National Training that you can use.
 - To contact Learner Support phone or email:
04 439 7853
027 230 1571
learner.support@fire.org.nz
 - Tai Poutini Polytechnic and Otago University deliver business management and leadership components and qualifications on the SF-EO programmes
 - It is useful to evaluate training programmes following their completion to ensure that they have met the needs of the learners.
 - Volunteers’ performance often depends on how well they are selected, inducted into the organisation, and trained.
-

Section 8: Managing volunteer teams

- Effective team managers will understand the dynamics of their team.
- There is a difference between a group and a team.
- Members of a group will interact, identify a common purpose, and perceive themselves as a group.
- A team is a group with a defined task.
- Members of a team also depend on each others' efforts, are willing to work together, and are purposefully selected.
- There can be two types of teams—hierarchical and expert—each of which is useful for undertaking different types of tasks.
- Hierarchical teams have a recognised leader, a clear chain of command, and may have hierarchical sub-groups.
- Most work teams are hierarchical.
- Expert teams have expert members, minimal hierarchy, and a team co-ordinator rather than a leader.
- Many committees and special project groups are expert teams.
- A team leader's job is to ensure that a team is a cohesive and effective whole.
- Team membership has many potential personal benefits.
- Team membership may also have a number of drawbacks.
- Camaraderie; Colleague interactions, positive volunteering environment, working in a team towards a common goal, and leadership
- Every group develops its own sets of standards, both explicit and implicit.
- A team's standards can be both positive and negative.
- CFOs may need to act to modify existing standards or set new ones.
- Brigade managers need to consider the purpose of implementing a change of standards, and the possible effects of the change.
- Brigade managers may encounter resistance or apprehension to new standards.
- A volunteer brigade's morale relates to its enthusiasm, confidence and loyalty towards its function and / or tasks.

- Some factors or events will have a positive influence on team morale, and some a negative influence.
 - CFOs must carefully manage factors which influence team morale.
 - Brigade atmosphere relates to the general feeling and mood of the volunteer brigade environment.
 - A brigade's atmosphere is closely linked to its morale.
 - Brigade atmosphere is heavily influenced by the atmosphere in the wider NZFS.
 - CFOs have the greatest influence within the brigade.
 - The attitudes and behaviour of CFOs will influence behaviour and morale across the organisation.
 - Brigade atmosphere is not necessarily influenced by the kind of work being undertaken.
 - Brigades go through different phases as they mature: forming, storming, norming and performing.
-

Section 9: Supporting volunteer performance

- Managing performance involves evaluating and appraising CFO / DCFO work, as well as providing guidance and support.
- Managing performance focuses on developing CFO / DCFOs and enhancing their performance, as well as their job satisfaction.
- Performance appraisals involve evaluating and reviewing CFO / DCFOs' performance, and setting new performance goals.
- Performance appraisals should provide both positive and negative feedback.
- Performance goals should be specific, measurable, agreed, realistic and time-framed (SMART).
- Performance appraisal discussions provide a formal setting for problems to be raised and performance goals to be set.
- Appraisals should be interactive and developmental.
- Performance appraisal systems should be the same for both volunteers and paid staff.
- Appraisal interviews should be carefully designed and organised.
- It is often useful to evaluate specific areas of a CFO / DCFO's performance using a table or grading chart. Here you can identify an individual's strengths and areas for improvement.
- Raising performance issues requires careful planning and a tactful approach.
- Appraisal discussions also require the right environment, discussion of clearly defined problems and the CFO / DCFO's involvement.
- Performance coaching involves collaboration to improve a CFO / DCFO's performance.
- The CFO / DCFO's role description and standards of conduct of operational members can provide the bottom line when dealing with performance and discipline problems.
- Volunteers like to feel valued, empowered and rewarded by the organisation.
- Retaining volunteers often depends upon the support they receive.
- Recognition and rewards need to be appropriate to the situation, organisation and volunteer.

- There are numerous ways to recognise and reward volunteers.
 - It is important to reimburse volunteers for expenses they incur.
 - Full copies of all policies are available on Firenet / Policy.
 - Conflict management skills are essential when working with volunteers.
 - Conflict in social and work situations is common. It may exist between anyone and may arise for numerous reasons.
 - Conflict management strategies can help to minimise the scale and scope of potential conflict.
 - Conflict resolution involves identifying and understanding problems, evaluating possible solutions, and implementing them.
 - It is important to address and resolve challenging and destructive behaviour.
 - It is important for volunteer managers to negotiate effective change in challenging behaviour.
 - There may be alternatives to dismissing a volunteer.
 - Volunteers may end their involvement with an organisation for a number of reasons.
 - Exit interviews may be useful for ascertaining why volunteers are ending their involvement.
 - Area Managers / Assistant Area Managers need support as well.
 - Area managers need to be aware of conflict between paid staff and volunteers, and take steps to minimise and resolve this.
 - Volunteer performance problems need to be addressed promptly.
-

FAQ

- Volunteer managers should pay close attention to how their roles are defined by their job descriptions.
 - Volunteer management is both people-centred and detail-centred.
 - During screening it can be useful to ask volunteers why they want to volunteer and what they expect to gain.
 - Disengaging volunteers from roles they do not quite 'fit' does not necessarily mean that they are not suitable for other roles within the organisation.
 - Volunteers may underperform for various reasons and will therefore need to be dealt with differently.
 - Ultimately when resolving conflict, the interests of the organisation need to be the bottom line.
-

Personal insight interviews

- Learning about the experiences of others is very important for Volunteer Managers' own professional development.
-



Get in touch with us

Please contact the Xperts team if you need help.

Phone (+64) 04 902 0160

General admin@xperts.co.nz

Technology help support@xperts.co.nz