

Recruit. Lead. Deliver.

A case study on delivering a purposeful volunteer service.

BACKGROUND

Volunteers play a valuable role, along with staff, in the delivery of the HammondCare mission to *improve quality of life for people in need*. With 950+ volunteers, we aim to deliver an uncompromising, outstanding personalised service to people we care for.

Recruit

Define your ideal volunteer and recruit for those characteristics

- Who is your perfect volunteer? Make a list of the skills and qualities that you're seeking and weave them into the job description and interview guide.
- A highly engaged volunteer is the best form of advertising and a great source of referrals.

Marketing should embody the spirit of the organisation

- Align your marketing materials with the overall organisation mission and branding.
- Be clear and concise so that the enquirer can determine if they're a good match – or not.

Understand implications of recruiting unsuitable applicants

- Consider the financial cost of background checks as well as staff time.
- Volunteers who aren't the right fit may be harder to manage long term and difficult to exit the service.

Interviews are the gateway into the organisation

- Interviews not only help you in making a hiring decision, but it helps the applicant to determine if they feel comfortable in an aged care setting.
- Continue to sell the benefits of volunteering. What the applicant hears at the interview should match their experiences when they volunteer.

OUR FOUNDATION

Passion for the elderly is at the heart of attracting and retaining volunteers. Passion can be defined as a powerful or compelling emotion or feeling - and this is something that can be harnessed so that volunteers have a clear purpose.

Lead

On-boarding leaves a lasting impression

- Ensure the volunteers first day is a great one to remember. Introduce them to staff and show them around.
- Match new volunteers with existing volunteers as 'buddy mentors' to learn on the job.

Training that goes beyond the classroom

- Start with some mandatory training so all volunteers are aligned with safety and other key practices. Induct them into the organisation's mission and ethos.
- Recognise that some volunteers are eager to learn and can study remotely via the University of Tasmania 'Understanding Dementia' course.

Thank you

- It is rare to be thanked too much. Keep it simple and just say thanks on the spot.
- Celebrate together during National Volunteer Week.
- Put pen to paper and write a heartfelt message annually.

Keep connected

- Provide opportunities for volunteers to gather together, even if it's just for a coffee.
- Share information on the big picture via a regular newsletter.
- Capture photos of volunteers in action and display.

METHOD

Our HammondCare volunteer service delivery approach has been created through qualitative research, development and continuous refinement.

Deliver

Embed the volunteer service

- Engage with your organisation's leaders and understand their strategic goals.

Know your limits

- Respect that your volunteers are not paid staff
- Look to manage risks and weigh up the benefits. It's ok to say no to a project.

Recognise when to say goodbye

- It can be a painful task to say goodbye to a volunteer - and needs to be handled with sensitivity and courage.
- Speak with the volunteer and see if they can recognise themselves that their service is no longer beneficial.

Seek and create new opportunities

- Be alert to new opportunities where volunteers can improve the quality of life.
- Be creative and think outside the box.

CONCLUSION

As a coordinator of volunteers, we're entrusted to bring people together from all walks of life to serve together in a cohesive and seamless manner for the benefit of the people we care for.