

BEST VOLUNTEER TRAITS

When you find the right volunteers who work hard to make a difference, your organization can provide more services to your community, encourage other volunteers to serve, and improve your fundraising efforts.

1. They Are Organized

Your organization is likely involved in several volunteer opportunities, programs, and events. You have a lot to juggle, and when you prepare for a volunteer event, you want volunteers to accomplish tasks effectively so you can maximize their impact.

We need volunteers who have a broad perspective of their volunteer work. A volunteer should be able to follow directions and stay on task to help keep things running smoothly. Finding organized and efficient volunteers can help us magnify our organization's impact on our community.

2. They Are Courageous

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A good volunteer will approach these situations with bravery. Other people might shy away from certain tasks due to discomfort or fear. The best volunteers will gather their courage, even if they are a little hesitant, and do what needs to be done, all with a positive attitude.

3. They Have Incredible Patience

Social skills are vital for any volunteer. Whether our organization focuses on helping people or not, volunteers work with other members of our organization. Acting and speaking with patience will help smooth activities even when they don't go according to plan.

Even the best-organized program sometimes encounters downtime. A good volunteer will accept delays and make the best use of their time anyway. They are also easy-going, even under challenging situations.

4. They Have a Team Player Mindset

Volunteering is all about working toward a goal or cause bigger than yourself. Building a highly functioning team enables us to accomplish a lot more than we could as an individual. It takes teamwork to drive significant changes, and a cooperative attitude will take new volunteers far.

Working well with others and strengthening the team are important skills in a collaborative environment like a volunteer organization. Good volunteers will stay focused on their goals, effectively encourage those around them, and maintain their positivity even if the team experiences some setbacks.

5. They Are Boundlessly Creative

Creativity and imagination are great volunteer traits. When resources are limited, it takes thinking outside of the box to accomplish tasks and make a difference. Organizations rely heavily on volunteers who can see the big picture and discover a creative way to get from point A to B.

A good volunteer does their work well and can sometimes think of new solutions to accomplish goals. With an imaginative spirit, volunteers can overcome obstacles and help your organization thrive.

6. They Are Passionate

Passion about and conviction in a cause drive your organization to do what it does. It's why you and other administrators put in the time to meet your goals. When situations don't go according to plan, we need volunteers driven by determination and results.

People passionate about our mission and our organization will be excited about volunteering each day, even when their job is to accomplish seemingly mundane tasks. Their passion for the cause will drive them forward. They will also have the ability to excite others and motivate them to give or serve, magnifying our impact.

7. They Have Compassion for Others

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Volunteering for any cause carries an array of challenges and introduces volunteers to new people and circumstances. Differences, language barriers, living situations, and more can all present an opportunity for volunteers to display their compassion for others.

Compassion is one of the best volunteer traits to find in a person. A great volunteer welcomes differences and uses empathy to understand others' life experiences. Whether a volunteer speaks with a person who has experienced loss, has mental challenges, or engage with our participants, they need to exercise compassion for those in vulnerable situations.

8. They Take Initiative

Our organization has plenty of work to go around. Great volunteers will begin taking initiative after they've familiarized themselves with the scope of their work, so they can lighten others' loads and be proactive. "More hands make lighter work."

Outstanding volunteers will find ways to go above and beyond for the people and mission they serve. They will be able to discern which problems they should take to the organization's staff and which they can solve on their own. Then, they will begin working on getting things done.

9. They Stay Humble

The best volunteers recognize that while they might have considerable volunteer experience, or know a lot about a particular topic, they still have a lot to learn. Humility is an important trait. When volunteers stay humble, they can take themselves out of the situation and focus on the people and mission they serve.

Humble volunteers will usually be more interested in learning about your organization and the community it serves than boasting about their accomplishments. Their attitude puts them in an excellent position to learn from others and contribute to the goal.

10. They Are Committed to Your Cause

Many organizations struggle with volunteer retention. Finding volunteers who are genuinely committed to our cause and whose values align with our organization can help improve your retention rate and keep volunteers engaged.

Volunteers often have grand ideas of the change they can make in the world through their service. However, it can be challenging to see the end goal, and tasks might become a chore when reality sets in. A volunteer committed to our organization's mission will see their work through to the end, knowing that even a small action makes a lasting impact.

11. They Are Always Dependable

The work of volunteers keeps our doors open so we can continue to serve our community. Because we depend on our volunteers, their reliability is critical. If a volunteer commits their time and energy to our organization, you want them to follow through.

When recruiting volunteers, it is essential to determine if they can fulfill their commitment. For example, they should have means of transportation to show up to the correct location on time. We need dependable volunteers and need them to seek other volunteers who might like to join our team.

12. They Take Learning Opportunities

Volunteering is an excellent way for you to learn new skills, cultivate empathy, and create lasting change for the cause you care about most. Great volunteers are eager for opportunities to learn and grow as individuals.

Learning opportunities are abundant in volunteering. Whether it's stepping outside of their comfort zone or taking the opportunity to learn from someone who has been volunteering long-term, good volunteers are excited to learn. They will also be willing to take on new roles. These kinds of volunteers are excellent candidates for Board positions and can make a long-term impact.

13. They Have an Energetic Attitude

One of the best volunteer traits is an abundant supply of energy. Volunteering can be difficult work.

An energetic volunteer creates a better environment for everyone. Their optimism and enthusiasm for their work often spread to others, motivating them toward positive action. When days are long and tasks seem tedious, someone enthusiastic about the mission will remind everyone why they are involved with your cause.

14. They Are Flexible

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We recruit volunteers to do all kinds of work, and it often varies daily. You will also likely experience many situations where events don't go as you planned.

Look for flexible volunteers. They should have an open mind and want to be of service in working toward your mission. These volunteers aren't as concerned about playing a particular role — they can accept when plans change and are comfortable pivoting to make the best of those changes.

15. They Are Selfless

Selflessness is an important trait to have as a volunteer. After all, volunteering involves giving up one's time to help others accomplish a goal.

A volunteering experience can be enriching and build a person's resume. However, the focus should always be on the people or cause you are serving. We want to find volunteers who will put their own needs aside and help others, and who will make our organization one of its priorities. A selfless volunteer will often do more than is asked of them, help out when needed, and look for new ways to make an impact.

16. They Are Motivated

We have an endless supply of tasks for our volunteers to accomplish. When our volunteers arrive for work, we want them ready and driven to accomplish as much as they can. This way, everyone is looking forward to being productive and excited to make an impact.

A good volunteer does the work asked of them, and often a little more. Some volunteers will go about their tasks or assignments with little motivation. However, the self-motivated and internally driven ones will look for ways to significantly impact their project.

17. They Can Work Independently

All volunteers will need guidance when they first start. They need to receive orientation and understand their committee job description. They may even require some special training to work toward goals in the best way. Once a volunteer has gotten accustomed to their role, they should begin working independently.

Developing open communication among our volunteers is crucial for building a teamwork mindset and helping people when they get stuck. However, a good volunteer won't need to be constantly told what to do or how to do it. They can work independently and manage their time efficiently to ensure that all work gets done.

18. They See the Good

In your organization's line of work, you might encounter difficult situations. Sometimes, events and workdays might be derailed or delayed, or a setback could occur that demotivates the entire team. When issues arise, we want volunteers who will keep a positive outlook.

Seeing the good in situations and people is a valuable skill. It takes a thoughtful and deliberate mindset to look at the positive when it seems hard to find. Volunteers with this attitude will help everyone remember why they are committed to our mission and why they should keep pushing forward.

19. They Are Great Leaders

Our organization's board members and supervisors aren't the only leaders heading up work for your mission. With all these qualities and more, the most exceptional volunteers often stand out from the rest and lead by their example.

Leaders inspire others and motivate them to action. Volunteers who are natural leaders are great at training others to accomplish tasks and help your organization optimize its operations. These volunteers can do more than follow instructions — they can also mobilize others to meet goals and empower them to take on new challenges.

20. They Make Their Communities Better Places

Some of the best volunteers have a history of volunteer experience. People invested in making their community a better place are often busy working toward that goal, getting involved in several causes they care about, and doing everything they can to help those around them.