



# Enterprising Rural Families™

This newsletter is an instrument of the *Enterprising Rural Families: Making It Work* program of the University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service. For further information concerning the Enterprising Rural Families program or on-line course contact [information@eRuralFamilies.org](mailto:information@eRuralFamilies.org) or go to <http://eRuralFamilies.org/>.

An Online Newsletter May, 2010 Volume VI, Issue 5

## MOTIVATING VOLUNTEERS

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What motivates people to volunteer? Experts suggest that there are three types of motivation. People are motivated by the desire for achievement, affiliation or influence. The three types of motivation are listed in the chart below along with personal characteristics associated with each type and how the person thinks.

### TIP OF THE MONTH:

Goals set for your business should meet the **SMART** test.

**Specific:** What is going to be done? How will it be done? Who will do it? Why is this important?

**Measurable:** How will we know when the goal is accomplished? What quantifiable outcome should result? What data must be captured?

**Attainable:** Make you stretch, but don't exceed your reach. Is this within your power to control? Are you within your budget? Should have at least 50% chance of being achieved.

**Related:** Fits within your vision and mission statements. Are all goals connected to or associated with one another? Do they move you forward in the same direction? Do they optimize your resources, rather than competing for them?

**Time-based:** Determine when you plan to work at the goal. Define a clear deadline or end-point. Have measurable, attainable, and realistic deadlines.

| TYPE OF MOTIVATION | PERSON'S CHARACTERISTICS  | THIS PERSON SPENDS TIME THINKING ABOUT:  |
|--------------------|---|--|
| <b>Achievement</b> | -Excellence<br>-Personal best<br>-Takes risk<br>-Unique accomplishment<br>-Restless and innovative<br>-Wants concrete feedback  | -Doing job better<br>-Accomplish the important<br>-Advance career<br>-Attain goal<br>-Overcome obstacles |
| <b>Affiliation</b> | -Wants to be liked and accepted<br>-Interpersonal relationships<br>-Need warm and friendly relations<br>-Not a loner            | -Consoling or helping people<br>-The feelings of others and themselves                                   |
| <b>Influence</b>   | -Reputation, position<br>-Gives advice<br>-Wants own ideas to predominate<br>-Verbally fluent<br>-Forceful, sometimes outspoken | -Influence over others<br>-Uses influence to change people<br>-Gain status and authority                 |

### Achievement:

These volunteers enjoy seeing concrete evidence of their work: piles of finished paperwork, names checked off lists, dozens of cookies baked, bags filled with groceries at food banks. It's probably not a good idea to put these volunteers to work on a project where abstract goals are pursued or where achievements are hard to accomplish. Look for volunteer positions for them where they can either complete practical, tangible projects or at least receive a type of certificate of completion.

### Affiliation:

These volunteers like being part of an organization, club or team. They enjoy opportunities to get together with others with similar beliefs, backgrounds or goals, and being associated with a well-known cause or group. They probably would not find working alone or for an obscure organization very satisfying. They work best in a volunteer position where social opportunities are part of the program, where they work on group projects, represent the program to the public or wear a badge, uniform or T-shirt with the organization's logo for example.



**Influence:**

These volunteers like persuading people to see or do things their way. Even if one doesn't always act as an official leader, he or she will enjoy showing people a better, easier way of accomplishing an objective. They probably don't want to be in a very insignificant position or to be the newcomer in an already close-knit or routine-bound group. Look for positions for these volunteers where they will help make decisions (such as a board position), teach or train people, help with rehabilitation or tutoring, or raise money for a person, cause or organization.

Volunteers likely combine motivators and possess some elements of each. Your best bet is to look for the strongest motivator and work with that.

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### Generational Differences in Volunteerism

There are also generational differences in volunteerism. Understanding these differences helps leaders and managers design individualized volunteer experiences that are more rewarding to individuals as well as the business or organization.

**Seniors**

Often, seniors have been volunteering for years. They take pride in the organization and take the perspective that they know what is best for the group. They feel personally hurt and even rejected when their ideas are not heard and acted on quickly. They often resent young whippersnappers who offer quick solutions to problems they have pondered for years. This is their program and newcomers don't understand the organization the way they do.

They worry about health, safety and a dwindling supply of peers. Seniors value hard work and volunteer many hours per week on a regular basis. They consider volunteering their duty and they are very loyal and dependable. They want to be listened to, heeded and obeyed because they know what's best. They expect the manager to consult them and learn from their expertise.

**Boomers**

Baby boomers wanted it all and they got it! Career, parenthood, house-manager, super-friend, PTA-till-you-drop! They juggle a dozen things at once including business, family and community. They are tired a lot of the time and rarely have moments for themselves.

They choose volunteer activities carefully, often involving themselves where they can use their special skills to do specific jobs for a cause to which they are personally committed. They want to see results and know they are making a difference. They want to leave a legacy.

They expect efficiency in their volunteer program and resent a lack of guidelines for what needs to be done. They like short-term, specific, whole work assignments. They are problem solvers and expect the leader to diagnose the root cause of difficulties and step in to remedy them. They take their turn at leadership because they believe that everyone has to share the load. They expect to be respected and heard. They do not have time to play games. Boomers rarely commit to long-term assignments.

**Younger Boomers**

They want it all and are very focused on making it happen! They plan for everything, juggling life's demands easily and carefully. They consider every move by how much time and energy it will take and if the results will be maximized.

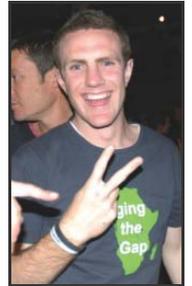
They become a volunteer when they see a cause that impacts them. They tend to shy away from volunteer groups that are founded in rules and regulations, militaristic or dominated by any form of the "old-guard". They rarely join membership organizations.

They want short-term assignments they can do at home or in the office, or with significant others, quickly and efficiently. They expect the leader to tell them what is needed, train them in how to do it, have everything ready for their involvement and then leave them alone. They resent not being able to make decisions about how to do their work or anyone who stands in their way of getting the job done as they see fit.

They respect the elders in the program as individuals but do not believe seniority gives them the right to rule. They dislike tyranny in others yet expect to be heard if they feel they have a better idea. They are often impatient and want results quickly.

### Generation X

They do not understand the concept of "taking your turn" and classify it as obsolete. They are mystified as to why some of the older volunteers keep telling them that they don't understand. They have never had a problem without a quick fix. They fear nothing and are willing to try anything. They don't read rule books, they want to figure things out as they go. They are passionate about specific issues and tend to throw themselves headlong into efforts to address these issues.



They see everything as a part of a global whole. If they volunteer, they do so because it impacts them directly. They expect to have a leadership role quickly and leave groups that do not offer this. They laugh at uniforms, symbols, matching t-shirts or logos. They expect written job designs, demand accountability, want constant information, preferably as a text or email. They avoid long term assignments, especially titled positions (secretary, treasurer, etc.) because they denote rigidity and duties.

They expect the leader to be their friend and equal, to respond to their ideas, to clear the way for them to optimize their energies and to be professional, firing volunteers that make trouble and solving problems as they arise. They say "no" more than "yes". They are always in a hurry, are self-assured and opinionated. They have boundless energy, vast knowledge, enthusiasm, believe they can and will "do it all", know a little about a lot of things and are fearless in trying new ideas. Generation X moves from effort to effort quickly.

### Generation Y (Millennials)

The impact of this generation on volunteerism is yet to be discovered but indications are that they believe strongly in volunteerism and civic duty. They are willing and competent and should contribute a great deal in the volunteer arena.

Reference:

Vineyard, S. & McCurley, S. (2001), *Best Practices for Volunteer Programs*, Heritage Arts Publishing.



**Motivation is not something you do to someone. Motivation comes from within, and we have to understand what people like to do and don't like to do in order to match them to the right jobs.**



*Enterprising Rural Families<sup>TM</sup>*

*May, 2010 Volume VI, Issue 5*