

> trends [4]

The definitive [4] times per year source of philanthropic trends analysis in Canada

The Volunteer Issue

We must never lose sight of the fact that volunteers are not an interruption of our work, but rather our partners in accomplishing it.

While perhaps an obvious sentiment, I think it's a worthwhile reminder that our sector cannot function without them: we need volunteers to run programs and deliver services; we need them to help us fundraise and generate revenue; and we need them to govern our organizations as board members.

We turn our attention in this edition of *Philanthropic Trends Quarterly* to volunteers, with a particular focus on the areas of governance and fundraising. We do so not only because of their importance, but also because we are finding ourselves more and more often working with our clients in areas related to their volunteers. Whether developing a volunteer structure for their campaigns, coaching them on how to create volunteer impact or reviewing their governance mandate, we are seeing that this is an area of much growth and change.

And what are volunteers looking for in their involvement with non-profit organizations? Clues to answering that question can be found by understanding why volunteers stop volunteering! The Volunteer Management Capacity Study, which was conducted in the US by the Corporation for National and Community Service, the Urban Institute and the UPS Foundation uncovered five main reasons:

- Not Matching Volunteers' Skills with Assignments
- Failing to Recognize Volunteers' Contributions
- Not Measuring the Value of Volunteers
- Failing to Train and Invest in Volunteers



• Staff Failing to Provide Strong Leadership

These findings are a wakeup call for the sector. As you will see in this edition, volunteers are taking their roles very seriously and we need to respond in kind. We have to be very strategic about our volunteers – how we recruit them, how we make use of their contributions of time and skill, and, how we recognize and steward them. And as you will also see, leading organizations not only do all of that, they have also taken their relationship with their

volunteers to the level of true partnership.

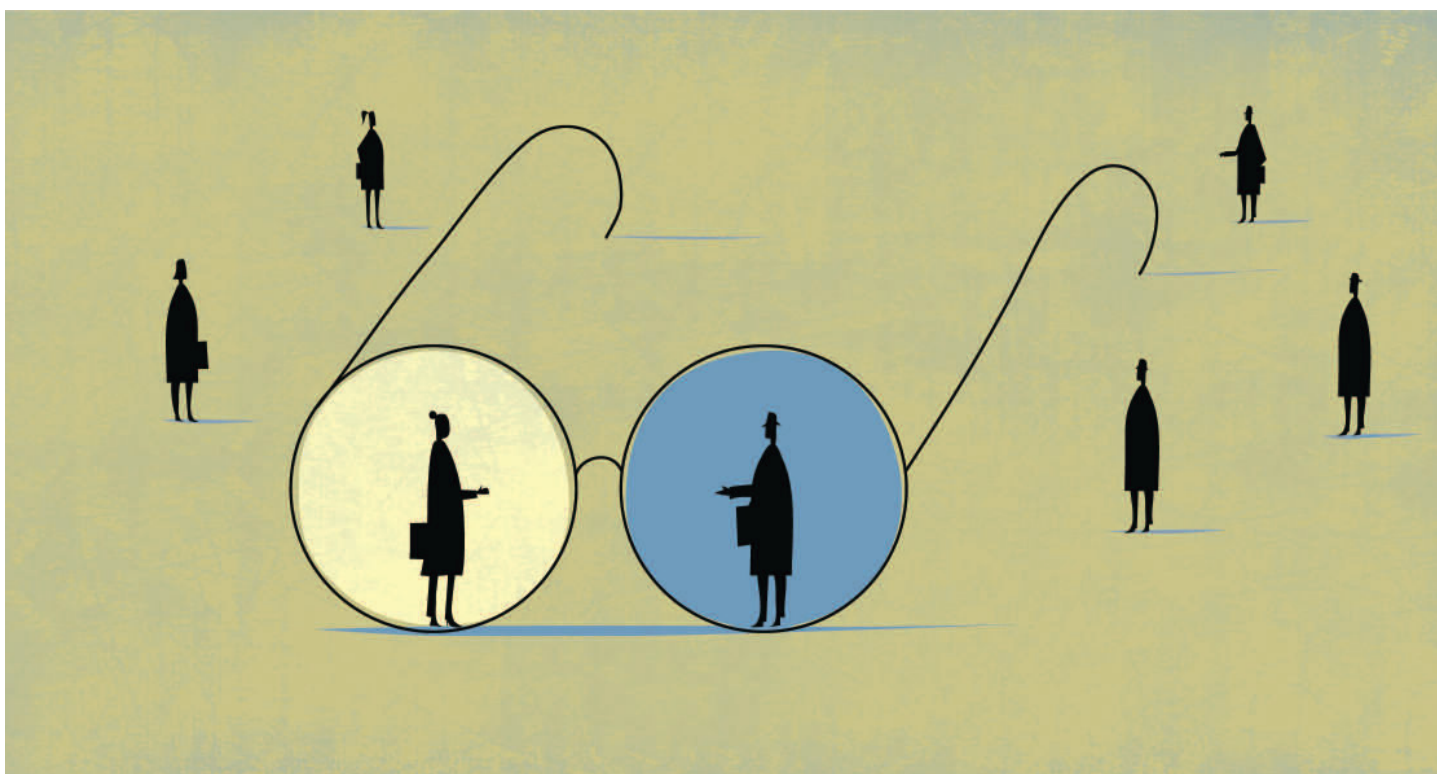
Hope you find lots of food for thought in this edition...have a wonderful fall!

Marnie Spears
President and CEO



advanced philanthropy™
KETCHUM CANADA INC.





The evolving role of the volunteer

The impact of volunteers in Canada is enormously telling!

A 2009 report from Volunteer Canada estimates the contribution made by volunteers to the Canadian economy to be 2 billion volunteer hours per year. Citing the National Survey of Non-profit and Voluntary Sector Organizations (NSNVO), the report states that the majority (54%) of the organizations that make up the non-profit and voluntary sector are operated entirely by volunteers. In addition, almost 12 million Canadians (or 45% of the population aged 15 years and older) report that they volunteer. And the economic value of this contribution? Statistics Canada places it at around \$14 billion dollars!

No one size fits all

When it comes to models and structures related to volunteer management, there is no one size fits all. In order to determine the governance and fundraising structures that are best for your organization, it is critical to

first realistically assess what your needs are in both functions.

Based on his observations and experience in his 25 years in the business, Innes van Nostrand, Vice Principal, Upper Canada College, describes what he believes are three phases of evolution with respect to involvement of volunteers in fundraising. "Each stage has its own set of characteristics that prescribe the model for volunteer involvement best suited to a particular organization," says van Nostrand "and it behooves all organizations to understand their particular situation when determining the best way to involve volunteers in activities."

In Phase 1, the "Inception Phase," organizations are in "start up mode" with very little, if any, development staff. As a result, the organization relies heavily on volunteers, who do the bulk, if not all, of the fundraising for the organization.

Phase 2 could be classified as the "Small

Shop Phase," where the organization has grown to having staff involved in fundraising. This is also when the organization probably begins to develop its major gift fundraising or when it undertakes its first capital campaign. However, volunteers are still generally the primary "fundraisers" involved in solicitation.

And finally, the "Mature Phase," where the fundraising approach tends to be much more staff-driven and professional staff, including senior institutional leadership, play a much more significant role. Even at this stage, charities strive to find the right balance of volunteer involvement, and it is not uncommon for them to shift back and forth based on calibre of the available volunteer pool, attitudes of the CEO, and relationships with the donors.

Role clarity

This model aptly illustrates that volunteer requirements change as organizations grow and evolve. But, regardless of the phase in



which your organization finds itself, one thing is vital – clarity about the role you want volunteers to play.

Unfortunately, a 2009 study by researchers at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and Ohio University found this is often not the case. Their survey of 219 CEOs and 249 board members shows that role ambiguity is still commonplace in the non-profit sector and most board members receive neither training nor feedback about their activities. This lack of information leads to confusion about what their role is, which in turn dampens their commitment to the board.

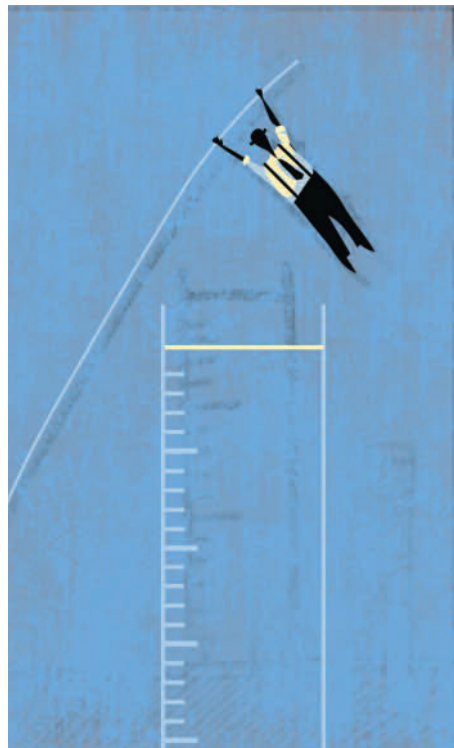
Some of this role ambiguity is undoubtedly driven by fear that too much transparency will negatively impact the organization's ability to recruit volunteers, particularly if the role involves raising money. But, the experience of the Toronto General & Western Hospital Foundation proves this doesn't have to be the case.

When recruiting new members to its board, the Foundation is very clear about the role that board members are expected to play. And it's a big role. In addition to activities related to governance, every Foundation board member is actively involved in fundraising for the Hospital. "UHN completed its last 'campaign' five years ago and since then has run a series of 'mini-campaigns' to support hospital projects and priorities. As volunteers join the board, they are asked to select a project for which they can help raise funds," says Tennyson Hanson, President & CEO. And if you're thinking that they must have a hard time recruiting board members, you'd be wrong. "We actually now have more candidates than board positions," says Hanson. An enviable position for any organization to be in, let alone one whose primary mandate is to raise funds!

The TGWH Foundation also makes no apology for the high level of expectation it has of its board members, citing that it is needed in order for it to be the best organization it can be. But it's important to note that this orientation is backed up by the high degree of professionalism with which the organization

...attention on accountability has translated into an even stronger sense of responsibility on the part of board members. They are asking tougher questions of management and want to understand all relevant aspects of the organization and its decisions...

is run. And this level of professionalism is becoming essential throughout the sector, as volunteers are taking their roles much more seriously than in the past. "There has been so much scrutiny and conversation of late related to accountability in the non-profit sector," says Ruth Armstrong, Founder of VISION Management Services and Adjunct Faculty Member at York University's Schulich School of Business, MBA Program, where she teaches non-profit governance and accountability. "All this attention on accountability has translated into an even stronger sense of



responsibility on the part of board members. They are asking tougher questions of management and want to understand all relevant aspects of the organization and its decisions."

One of the most senior and well respected businessmen and volunteers in Montreal confirms that assessment. Norman Hébert is President of Park Avenue Group and Chairman of Société des Alcools in his professional life. But his volunteer career has been equally illustrious. He is currently a member of Concordia University's Board of Governors, the Advisory Board of the John Molson School of Business, Campaign Cabinet Member of IRCM Foundation and Campaign Co-Chair of both the Charles-LeMoine Hospital Foundation and the 2010 Centraide Montreal Campaign. "Over the years, I have noticed a change in the way volunteers approach their roles as well as how they choose the organizations that they want to be involved with," Hébert says. "Before people agree to volunteer, they do their due diligence by asking questions about the organization's strategy, budget, governance model and reputation." He goes on to say that in his experience with volunteer recruitment, success is two-thirds preparation and one third execution. So it is absolutely critical for organizations to ensure that their "house is in order" before approaching prospective volunteers to request their involvement.

Investing and measuring value

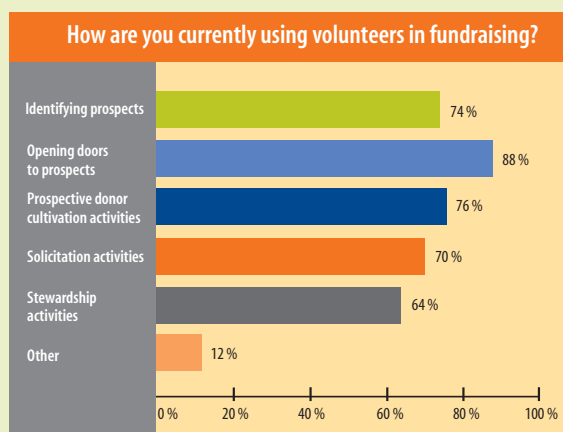
In addition to role clarity, another characteristic of best in class organizations is recognizing volunteers as strategic assets that require care, nurturing and investment in order to make the most of what they bring to the table. And maximizing that investment starts with the approach taken to recruitment and nominations. Unfortunately, our experience confirms that without a thoughtful recruitment strategy matched to overall organizational needs, organizations can become burdened by an ineffectual team of volunteers.

The Queen Elizabeth II Health Sciences Centre Foundation in Halifax is a case study in best practice when it comes to the



How organizations are using volunteers in fundraising

Volunteers continue to be heavily involved with the fundraising activities of charitable organizations. The results of a spring 2010 KCI poll conducted among a cross-section of clients revealed that the most common use of volunteers in fundraising continues to be 'opening doors to prospects' with 88% of respondents indicating that they engage their volunteers in this activity. A majority also use volunteers to identify prospects (74%), cultivate prospects (76%) and solicit prospects (70%). Stewardship was the activity in



which volunteers are least often involved, but still 64% of respondents were using volunteers in this way.

process it follows to recruit new volunteers. "We are now spending much more time on our nominating process with careful consideration paid to the skill sets and demographics that we need around our Board table," says Bill Bean, President and CEO. In some instances, their recommendations involve a fairly long time horizon in their deliberations. "We approach board recruitment similarly to how we think about donors," Bean says. "We identify candidates and, in some cases, enter into a long term cultivation strategy before inviting them to become a member." While a significant investment of time is required to make this strategy work, Bean believes it is critical to organizational success.

Of course, when an investment is made, smart organizations set up processes to measure the return they are getting on that investment. And key to that is measuring performance. More and more organizations are beginning to develop performance measurement programs for their volunteers, aligned with ones that are created for staff.

Volunteers, whether board or fundraising, should be taken through an exercise to identify their annual goals and objectives as well as the accompanying metrics that will be used to measure progress. Some organizations are considering the development of individual scorecards for each volunteer, which can include metrics like attendance, participation in special events, participation as a donor as well as number of potential donors identified and number of calls completed. Whatever metrics are chosen, the key is that they tie back to the role that the volunteer is playing for the organization.

Power of partnership

A trend that has been noted for many years is a shift to what has been termed 'staff-driven' fundraising. While there is no denying that professional fundraising staff play a much greater role in activities like cultivation, solicitation and stewardship than they used to, the movement now is toward a 'partnership model'. While the staff-driven approach often saw volunteers take a sec-

ondary role in setting and executing strategy, the partnership model brings into balance the role that staff and volunteers play in accomplishing these activities. And many believe that this evolution will yield tremendous results.

McMaster University's recently completed 'Campaign for McMaster University', with its final achievement of \$473 million on a \$400 million goal, is a testament to the power of partnership between volunteers and staff. "There was a different tenor to the involvement of our volunteers in this campaign compared to our previous campaigns," says Roger Trull, McMaster's Vice President Advancement, "as our professional staff played a much bigger role than in the past, including a wider swath of our senior institutional leadership. But rather than simply utilizing volunteers as door-openers, we took a partnership-based approach to setting strategy. Working together in this way allowed us to harness the combined power of our professional staff's skill and expertise with the knowledge and experience of our volunteers." And as evidenced by the campaign's final achievement, this tactic generated very strong results.

Just as valuing donors for more than their money is critical to establishing a culture of philanthropy so, too, is viewing volunteers as organizational partners that require attention and investment. And no matter what stage of development your organization is in with respect to its volunteer needs, adopting this philosophy is guaranteed to reap you significant tangible impact.

> Next issue:

Watch for our next edition in early December that will focus on trends in communications.

Marnie A. Spears
President and CEO

Nicole Nakoneshny
Senior Consultant & Editor,
Philanthropic Trends Quarterly

Philanthropic Trends Quarterly© is published by KCI. Unauthorized reproduction or distribution without attribution is prohibited. Philanthropic Trends Quarterly© is intended to provide an anecdotal 'snapshot' of philanthropy in Canada. We hope it will serve as a useful overview for observers of the charitable and nonprofit scene.

Aussi disponible en français. Illustrations by Rocco Baviera



advanced philanthropy™
KETCHUM CANADA INC.