



VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

THE VALUE OF COMMUNITY
VOLUNTEER PARTICIPATION

SAMPLE REPORT



M.W.T.C. Cyclical Volunteers

THE CYCLICAL NATURE OF VOLUNTEERING FOR M.W.T.C.

The way the event is structured calls for chair persons, captains, and staffers to run each committee of the tennis event. Dan Clark establishes a vast array of methods of recruiting and obtaining volunteers. His three main sources being: word of mouth, corporate recruiting, and online advertising (Daprano, et. al, 2007). With the multiple categories of volunteer necessities, each committee functions as its own microcosm that adheres to a hierarchy of command. Volunteers take on multiple shifts a day and there needs to be plenty of flexibility in a volunteer's schedule for overlaps. Due to this being an unpaid position that many people do more for community involvement and enjoyment, the volunteers tend to remain loyal to the organization for many years. However, there is a lack of diversity among who actually volunteers and outlying factors such as time constraints and other obligations can lead to high turnover among the chairs and captains of the M.W.T.T. event.

MANAGING RETENTION AND SUPPORT OF VOLUNTEERS

One of the main areas of concern is retention of chair persons and captains, especially in the transportation and sponsor/hospitality committees. In the study conducted by Cuskelly et. al (2006), the researchers found "Perceived problems in the retention of volunteer committee or board members were predicted by training and support practices only" (p. 167). From this conclusion, we understand that the empirical data shows that coordinators need to expend more resources in providing direct support and more meaningful training to the leaders of each committee. They need to understand the full scope of the needs of the event and all the intricacies of the position and issues that may arise if needs are not met. The sponsorship chair states "I am afraid, however, that I do not have a good systematic process written down that I can pass on to the next chair" (Daprano, et. al, 2007). Therefore, the next chair person will have to re-establish an effective system for attaining sponsorship and fostering relationships with the community to support the event. This is a time-consuming task that takes the planning committee a lot of time already. There needs to be a streamlined, clearly-defined system for sponsorship that can be passed from one chair person to the next.

M.W.T.C. Cyclical Volunteers Cont.

"VETRAN" VOLUNTEERS

Members of the Midwest Tennis Tournament volunteer organization are a valuable asset to the event. Through experience and know-how these individuals present the opportunity to teach and lead new generations of volunteers best practices for managing a successful event. Clark expresses that he is interested in establishing a Leadership Program that will give valuable experience to up-and-coming leaders who are seeking these skills for employment, etc. (Daprano, et. al, 2007). To establish this program, Clark will need to utilize veterans as trainers and leaders to establish a standard-level of leadership and show the incoming leadership how to manage each committee and the functions of the committee in the overall success of the event. The veteran volunteer then has the opportunity to impart wisdom to new volunteers and gives them an extra sense of purpose and appreciation of their contributions for the tournament. Ultimately, If they do not want to continue as a leader, they can demote to a staffer and chose a committee to support which would reduce the amount of time and responsibility of the veteran volunteer.

RESULTS OF SUPPORTING BOTH TOURNAMENTS

Based on the data shown and the responses from the chair persons, it is viable to have a women's tournament. However, the quality of the organization is at stake due to the unsure nature of the being able to retain enough volunteers for both tournaments. Doherty (2010) notes "the volunteer legacy associated with planning volunteers appears to be relatively more dependent on their experiences of task overload and personal inconvenience" (p. 203). It is important to maintain the integrity and the level of excellence that the Midwest Tennis Tournament has set for itself. Dan Clark will need to cognizant of not overloading his volunteers by asking them to commit to volunteer to both tournaments in July and August. For those whom work or have familial obligations, this could become a strain. These volunteers might experience fatigue or burn-out and lose the enjoyment and the sense of purpose that drove them to volunteer in the first place.



M.W.T.C. Volunteer Profiles

20 AND YOUNGER AGE PROFILE

These volunteers make up 15.7 percent of the overall volunteer staff for the tournament. They are typically participating for community and/or service organization hours, play tennis, or have some type of interest in the event. This group typically makes up the most diverse population when it comes to race and socioeconomic status of volunteers.

31-40 YRS. AGE PROFILE

These volunteers make up 14.2 percent of the workforce for the event. They fall in the \$35-\$60 thousand dollar income range. They most likely play tennis recreationally or have some type of interest in the sport. These individuals are predominately part of the efforts to recruit corporate and business volunteers. Their employers have granted them time to participate in the tournament. They are the second most diverse population of volunteers when it comes to race.

41-50 YRS. AGE PROFILE

These volunteers make up the highest population with 22.2 percent of contributors to the event. They fall in the \$59 to over \$75 thousand dollar income range. Much like the younger age group, they most likely play tennis recreationally or have some type of interest in the sport. These individuals are predominately part of the efforts to recruit corporate and business volunteers. Their employers have granted them time to participate in the tournament. There is limited diversity in terms of race among these volunteers.



M.W.T.C. Volunteer Profiles Cont.

51-60 YRS. AGE PROFILE

These volunteers make up the second highest population with 17.7 percent of the workforce for the event. Most of them fall in the over \$75 thousand dollar income range. A large portion of this group plays tennis regularly recreationally and are mostly likely to belong to a tennis club. These individuals range from still working to retirement age. They have flexibility in their schedules and can work multiple shifts for the event. There is limited diversity in terms of race among these volunteers.

51-60 YRS. AGE PROFILE

These volunteers make up 16.2 percent of the workforce for the event. Most of them fall in the over \$75 thousand dollar income range. A large portion of this group plays tennis regularly recreationally and are mostly likely to belong to a tennis club. These individuals are predominantly retirement age. They have flexibility in their schedules and can work multiple shifts for the event. However, mobility and transportation may become an issue during certain parts of the day. There is limited diversity in terms of race among these volunteers.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION NEEDS

From the data in Appendix A, we see that the 21-30 year old age group is a mere 8 percent of the population. This is most likely due to limited flexibility in their schedules. The event needs to reach out to more progressive work environments to gain support and volunteers in this age range. They can be a huge asset due to their technological skill sets and physical capabilities. Also, the 41-71 year olds must be top priority in support and training because they make up the highest population of the volunteer workforce (Daprano, et. al, 2007).



VOLUNTEER ROLES VULNERABLE TO TURNOVER

THE CHAIR PERSON, OPERATIONS, & SPONSOR/HOSPITALITY

In most of the responses from the chair persons of each committee, the chair person had a limited amount of time left to server or was passing on their position to a successor. The assumption is that these are full-time positions that require many hours of dedication and focus. Therefore, due to time constraints or other obligations, these individuals do not feel like they can meet the needs of the role. Transportation is a difficult role due to the scheduling needs of the shifts. It is a largely important task that requires training, professionalism, and requirements of the job that limits the amount of people that can fulfill the position (25 yrs. of age, valid driver's license, etc.). For the sponsorship committee, it is probably one of the most important tasks because it secures the funding to ensure the success of the event. It is time-consuming and requires a set of skills that not everyone possesses in order to establish business relationships with donors and community supporters.



KEY FACTORS TO RETAIN VOLUNTEERS

There are outlying factors that volunteer managers are not going to be able to control when it comes to retaining volunteers from year-to-year. However, Fritz (2019) suggests that the number one way to keep volunteers satisfied is to make their job easy to do. Whether that be through effective communication, a friendly disposition, a wealth of help, or support for any issues that arise, it is the volunteer manager's role to make the volunteer's life easier. Finding ways to thank the volunteers for their support and show appreciation in unique ways also goes a long way. Chair persons have huge responsibilities managing teams and the functions of the committee. Therefore, it is imperative to supply them with as many hands as possible that are well-trained and knowledgeable which will make the chair person's job easier. Sponsorship and transportation are such important factors that utilizing any budget money to aide in this process and allocating resources to support these committees needs to be a priority. The volunteer manager should pick up the slack in any of these areas to ensure they are not overworking the volunteers.

INFORMATION RACHEL NEEDS

"An initial investigation into what the chair persons needs are, how many volunteers are in each committee, and the functions of each committee has been established. Now, Rachel must figure out if it will be a viable option for the organization to host a women's and men's tournament one month apart from each other. She must examine the current practices, the budget, and the staffing needs to see if it is the best interest of the Midwest Tennis Tournament to host both tournaments with the same level of service they are accustomed to delivering.

Doherty (2010) notes that one of the best ways to retain volunteers and evaluate the level of satisfaction is to observe events and collect direct feedback from the participants (p. 203). Rachel needs to observe how the committees are handling their duties and responsibilities and measure their feedback after the event of the level of satisfaction of the volunteers to the year prior. This will give her insight into the overall success of undertaking hosting two tournaments versus the one.

The information should be collected via an online and/or standard written survey on a rating of satisfaction scale. In addition, veteran volunteers should be allowed to submit feedback in the format of a survey of the experience and quality of hosting both tournaments versus years past. Chair persons should be interviewed after the events to get qualitative data on the overall satisfaction of their experience, their perceived value to the event, and the likeliness of continuing to lead in the following years.

The Leadership Training Program

In order for Clark to create an effective Team Leadership program, he will need to implement various human resource management strategies to build a structure that is valuable and beneficial to the volunteers. Taylor & McGraw (2006) conclude "the [HRM] challenge will be to build a sound participatory base for volunteers and paid employees that rewards, recognizes, and empowers individuals while meeting the rapidly changing needs of the sports organisation" (p. 243). Developing a team leadership opportunity for volunteers incentivizes the prestige of working for the Midwest Tennis Tournament. However, the volunteer manager must ensure that he has leaders available to mentor the incoming recruits. They need to target university students looking for opportunities to gain hands-on experience and young adults trying to establish leadership roles for resumes or promotions. The leadership program must be flexible for those individuals who have full-time commitments and clear, specific tasking needs that can be met over the duration of the planning/event process. Veteran volunteers will have to commit extra time to "mentoring" the leaders, and it must be a new set of leaders for each subsequent year. Previous leaders that graduate the program should be asked back to become mentors for the new leadership class. Another important element is that the team leadership program needs to come with top-tier perks. Clark will have to discern the best method for differentiating the experience for these individuals such as: a private meet-and-greet of a player, personal letters of recommendation, access to any future committee positions, and a team leader appreciation dinner at the end of the event as a capstone for completing the duties of the tournament.

The New Volunteer Initiative

TENNIS' DIVERSITY ISSUE

It is no secret that the perceived reputation of tennis revolves around wealth and social status. It is a 'country club' sport and draws a specific demographic when it comes to support and financing tournaments. Based on Appendix A, the demographics of the tournament volunteers are predominately white, middle-aged, wealthy, people with a peaked interest tennis.

A NEW GENERATION OF INCLUSION

The volunteer manager has the opportunity to bridge the gap in younger volunteers and their parents if he/she can create a way for students and young athletes to get involved. Offering a junior one-day tournament or an opportunity to practice with someone on the UTSA tour for the student with the most volunteer hours creates a brand loyalty to the event from a young age. Also, emphasizing diversity in younger tennis players is a key initiative that needs attention to create an environment of inclusivity.

SHIFTING THE STATUS QUO

A new planning committee needs to be proposed by the volunteer manager that revolves around a diversity initiative. Utilizing the 21-41 year old volunteers to reach out to community leaders, other volunteer organizations, and local diversity chapters can increase the interest. A social media campaign centered around the benefits of volunteering for all community members may create more buy-in.

BEING INTENTIONAL WITH RECRUITMENT

The Midwest Tennis Tournament has done an outstanding job of collecting empirical data on their current trends in regards to volunteers. The volunteer manager's responsibility is to use this information to grow the organization and reach out to outliers in the community that are looking for an opportunity to serve in an impactful way. As Fritz (2019) says, it is important to find the volunteers motivations and continue to create new opportunities.

Three Strategies for Increased Attraction to Volunteering

Ringuet (2020) finds that one of the main factors that hinders volunteers are personal issues including time away from family. To combat this, the M.W.T.T. should create a more family-friendly environment for the volunteers. This could include a kid zone, special events for children, and flexible scheduling for those with childcare needs.

Community outreach as far as volunteers needs to be more targeted. For instance, reaching out to local high schools with tennis programs or needs for community service hours can increase the volunteering population. Including a "High School Night" at the courts with reduce-priced tickets or an event on the grounds could entice potential volunteers to sign-up.

Chair persons have an extremely large role in the success of the event. Creating the Team Leadership program and recruiting college-aged and millennial-aged volunteers through their universities or their companies which will allow them time-off to participate can alleviate some of the pressure the chair persons and captains feel in the planning/event coordinating. Allowing this age group to feel valued and giving them a sense of purpose has the potential to create life-long volunteers for the tournament.

References

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