



Why People Don't Volunteer for Committee

In many cases the benefits clearly are outweighed by the reality (the negatives). The reality is that most of the population have had a negative experience when they have volunteered. The following are a sample of the negatives experienced by those currently volunteering:

Individual cost of volunteering (as determined by those who are currently volunteering)

- Costs dollars and time
- It places stress on relationships with partners and children
- Requires much more time than they were told to expect
- Volunteers can be expected to be on duty 24/7
- Made to feel guilty if they are not available 24/7
- As individuals they can be disrespected and treated poorly by the members
- They are often exposed to personal criticism
- They are over worked and often feel used and abused
- They feel betrayed because there is no recognition, reward or support
- They can be made to feel incompetent because they are thrown in the deep end
- They worry constantly about not completing their tasks in time or well
- They worry about the money available to do what they have to do
- They are concerned about their legal exposure

They see the current volunteers being badly treated, working far too hard, stressed most of the time, rarely happy and being exposed to personal criticism. They also know if they put their hand up to help, they would be in for life just like the current volunteers. Never can they just volunteer once, the organisation will always find another task for them to do.

Changes Needed & Steps to Success

- Modernise the governance structure and constitution of the organisation.
- Improve equity across all positions (share responsibility).
- Greatly improve the benefits and recognition for committee members.
- Clarify what is expected from the individuals.

- Improve the level of support and training provided.
- Improve the level of respect by members and by the organization.

Why volunteer?

People choose to volunteer for a variety of reasons. For some it offers the chance to give something back to the community or make a difference to the people around them. For others it provides an opportunity to develop new skills or build on existing experience and knowledge. Regardless of the motivation, what unites them all is that they find it both challenging and rewarding.

Below are some of the reasons people choose to volunteer. For some it provides an opportunity to:

- give something back to an organisation that has impacted on a person's life, either directly or indirectly
- make a difference to the lives of others
- help the environment
- help others less fortunate or without a voice
- feel valued and part of a team
- spend quality time away from work or a busy lifestyle
- gain confidence and self-esteem.

For some, volunteering can be a route to employment, or a chance to try something new which may lead to a career change. From this perspective, volunteering can be a way of:

- gaining new skills, knowledge and experience
- developing existing skills and knowledge
- enhancing a CV
- improving one's employment prospects
- gaining an accreditation
- using one's professional skills and knowledge to benefit others (usually described as pro bono).

For others, volunteering appeals because of its social benefits. These include:

- meeting new people and making new friends
- a chance to socialise
- getting to know the local community