

HOW TO RECRUIT AND DEVELOP ACTIVE VOLUNTEERS

Finding and retaining good volunteers can be one of the biggest challenges for Section Leaders. Yet it is vital to infuse the section with new ideas and energy. It also helps to prevent burnout and keep the entire section motivated and focused.

1. What motivates your volunteers?

Why would someone volunteer for your Section? What are some of the benefits? As someone involved in the operation of your Section you already know the training, camaraderie, and huge networking benefits you receive, but do your members know this? It is nice to volunteer for organizations that not only support something you believe in but offer some benefits as well.

2. Define what you want from the volunteers

Let them know the time commitments and expected duties. If need be, create a position description detailing the level of effort required for their volunteer service. Be honest and don't underestimate the time involved. If volunteers have a clear vision of what they are doing they will be more likely to make a long term commitment.

3. You have to ask!

It is a great idea to ask for volunteers while conducting your Section meeting or make announcements at events. However, this may be the least productive recruitment method. In order to get good volunteers you need to ask *personally*. Watch for leaders in your Section and people that tend to come to a lot of the events. Ask other members of your Section Board to look for potential volunteers as well. Once you have a person in mind approach them privately and tell them about the opportunity.

4. Make Volunteering Fun

Although professionalism is very important there are times when joking and relaxing are appropriate. Sometimes these can give you opportunity to connect on a more personal level, and it can be a good way to show you value both their time and commitment.

5. Show Appreciation

We all really appreciate the contributions our volunteers give to the Section and our industry as a whole, but do they know it? There are a variety of ways to let them know they are appreciated, such as:

- Thanking them for their service and telling them how much they are appreciated
- Setting aside time during a meeting to honor volunteers publicly
- Give certificates of appreciation or small plaques
- Contacting their employer with formal letters of thanks letting them know how valuable the volunteer is and how valuable they are to the Section