

One of the myths of the volunteer world is that daytime volunteers are an endangered species. In the past, organizations grew complacent in their dependency on female homemakers. When women took paying jobs (though in fact some homemakers still exist), such agencies found themselves without their accustomed source of volunteers. The good news is that organisations willing to seek new pools of talent will end up with an even better corps of volunteers than before.

There is no secret about where to find middle-aged, adult volunteers available for weekday assignments: recruit from the large segment of the workforce who do not work &quot;normal&quot; hours. In fact, logic shows that &quot;normal&quot; hours are relative indeed. Think about all the jobs that require: shift work; predominantly evening hours; weekend days; or odd or flexible schedules.

### **Shift Work**

A wide variety of institutions and businesses function twenty-four hours a day or at least on double shift. This means that many people who work 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. or 3:00 to 11:00 p.m. have discretionary time available overlapping the 9:00 to 5:00 agency day. Even the night shift might be attracted to early morning volunteer work. If you select worksites close to your organization's location, one of your recruitment pitches can be: &quot;help us out on your way to or from work with very little extra commuting.&quot; Consider the range of people and skills available in 24- hour worksites: hospitals and residential treatment programs; many factories; television and radio stations; police and fire departments; telephone companies; hotels; the military; the Postal Service and overnight delivery companies.

### **Evening Workers**

In the same vein, it is easy to identify businesses employing people mainly in the evening hours. Such workers often sleep late after a long night at work, but are prospective volunteers in the afternoon. Some sites are: restaurants; theaters; newspapers; janitorial services; computer services.

### **Weekend Workers**

Quite a number of jobs require Saturday and/or Sunday shifts, thereby giving employees a full day or two off during the week: parks and recreation programs; most cultural attractions such as museums and historic sites; churches and synagogues; libraries; shopping malls; hair salons;

sports and country clubs. Some jobs overlap categories, especially retail sales which employ people on the weekends and in the evenings.

### **Odd or "Free-to-Choose" Schedules**

Some employed people work on changing, inconsistent, or temporary schedules. While this may make it difficult to place such volunteers in regular assignments, they are nevertheless excellent resources for volunteering that focuses on producing a result rather than requiring a time commitment. Consider: airline personnel; substitute teachers; "temps" of all sorts; long distance truck drivers; farmers; university faculty; collection agents. A whole sub-category involves people who are self-employed or work on commission. They can choose to volunteer during a weekday and "make up" the work time later. For example: consultants; artists; anyone who works at home; sole practitioners in fields such as accounting or public relations; real estate agents.

It is probably worthwhile to point out that the higher a person rises in a company, the more flexibility s/he has in allocating his or her schedule. So you can consider top executives more likely weekday recruits than secretaries who have less choice.

### **How to Recruit These People**

There is nothing mysterious about encouraging the people identified above to volunteer: go to them and ask. This may mean arranging to send someone from your organization to a worksite in the evening to talk with prospective candidates. Target a worksite with a campaign that shows employees you really want their involvement. The "we're in the same neighborhood" approach makes sense to people. So do volunteer job descriptions that make use of the skills these employees demonstrate on their paying jobs.

People whose work hours differ from the majority are motivated by the same things as any other prospective volunteer. If we expect people who work Monday to Friday, 9:00 to 5:00, to volunteer in the evenings or on weekends, why is it surprising that someone who works in the evenings would be willing to volunteer in the morning? Ironically, loneliness may be a factor in favor of joining your organisation-maybe the Saturday employee has few ways to have fun on his or her Tuesday off.

So don't believe that the volunteer pool is "drying up" because women are in the paid work force. The great news is that there are vast reservoirs of talent that the nonprofit community has simply never approached. The sources identified here pose more of a challenge to the recruiter. But the necessity to reach out to these new places will result in a stronger and more diversified volunteer corps.

Source Rick Lynch

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