



Volunteer
Management

Why I Am Not A Volunteer

(A not-so-tongue-in-cheek confession of a former volunteer.)

Somehow, I get the feeling that NOT to be a volunteer in someone's program today is to be uncivilized. But, like many of my fellow sitter-outers, I have reasons for letting opportunity pass me by. You, the program operator, the professional, have supplied me with them. Do you really want to know why I am not a volunteer?

1. For a long time I never knew you wanted me. You communicated quite well, "I'd rather do it myself, thank you." You are articulate in expressing your needs in dollars and decimals. Your silence on services, I figured, was your last word.
2. Once you did call for help, and I stepped forward. But you never told me how to get started. I later thought that maybe what you actually said was, "Why don't we have lunch....sometime?"
3. I persevered however, I reported for duty. You turned me over to a department head and he, in turn, sent me down to the section chief. He was out and the secretary did not know what to do with so rare a species as a volunteer, so she suggested that I get in touch next Tuesday. I called, but my message got lost.
4. I might have overlooked the runaround. People cannot be blamed for doing the best they can, and the worst and best are hard to distinguish in the emptiness of a vacuum. For some reason, I thought you, as their leader, would have given a bit of thought beforehand to what you would do with me, a volunteer, or at least to let someone else know I was coming and give them the worry of organizing the situation.
5. Come time for the spring mail-out, and my neighbor and I appeared on the scene. We worked: for two days we licked stamps and envelope flaps, until the steak at supper tasted like glue. Then I learned from the slip of a clerk that before our coming, you had turned off the postage machine. I really cannot blame you; if you have not gone out of your way to make work for us, what would a couple of volunteers have done for two whole days?

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