

Art of Persuasion – Finding Volunteers

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Volunteers provide much needed support for our user groups and it seems we never have enough. Through volunteering, many people discover that it gives them an opportunity to expand their horizons and learn about new things. Many people believe they don't have time to get involved, but find when they do they have a much greater sense of belonging to the user group. They can make new friends and share their talents with other members of the user group. No job is too small.

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Know Your Members

- ▶ Learn their names (do your members wear badges?)
- ▶ Make it a practice to talk with different members before the meeting and during break time.
- ▶ Watch attendance (are they regular attendees?)
- ▶ Recognize their abilities
- ▶ Recognize their interests

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What's important to them

- ▶ Is it status?
- ▶ Do they just like to participate?
- ▶ Do they want to stay in the background rather than in front of the group?
- ▶ Make it positive and fun whatever their motivation is for volunteering

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Make the Task Small

- ▶ Ask for specific help
- ▶ Clearly define what's needed
- ▶ Don't ask for volunteers in a general way
- ▶ General appeal doesn't work as well as a one-on-one request
- ▶ Find the Right Person for the Right Job
- ▶ Tailor your approach to the person
- ▶ Convince them they can do the job
- ▶ Reinforce their confidence
- ▶ Assure him/her that resources and support will be available

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Follow-up

- ▶ Are they influenced by Other Volunteers
- ▶ Are your volunteers a happy group?
- ▶ Recognize the efforts of volunteers (verbally and in the newsletter)
- ▶ Are they being criticized?
- ▶ When someone isn't doing the job, move them to another with compliments

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Spin-off Advantages

- ▶ Volunteers hone skills
- ▶ Leads to other avenues of volunteering within the group
- ▶ Gets them acquainted with more members

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When the Job is Getting Done

- ▶ Leave them alone
- ▶ When the job is done, give them credit

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Remember ...

- ▶ There are lots of volunteer activities in a user group that don't require computer literacy
- ▶ Show them how to make the job easier if it's not working well
- ▶ **It takes all of us so KNOW YOUR MEMBERS**