



## Communication with Volunteers Across the Generations

Preferred forms of communication seem to be one of the biggest differences between generations. Here are tips from leaders of volunteers at MAVA workshop on what they have found for communication preferences in the different generations.

### **Traditionalists – Born before 1946**

- Enjoy in person face to face communication
- Like phone calls. Most, but not all, have phone answering machines.
- Many like to receive written notices and mail communication.
- Some, but not all, use e-mail.
- Facebook is not commonly used.
- Like handwritten thank you notes.

#### *Communication expectations*

- Some expect and like reminders others feel this is unnecessary.
- Do not expect immediate communication, but do expect follow through.

### **Boomers – Born 1946-1964**

- Email overall is a proffered method of communication, especially with the middle and later Boomers. However, not all Boomers use e-mail and the frequency of checking home e-mail varies.
- Most like e-newsletters. Some will say they don't like to see paper wasted.
- Like phone calls. Most have cells, but still use "land line" for main form of phone. Most have answering machine and the majority seems to check for messages.
- Use of Facebook is growing. Some are active users but some that have Facebook accounts that are seldom used. Others see Facebook as a timewaster or for their kids.
- Like personal face to face conversation.
- Few use twitter.
- Some text, but use it mostly for communication with children/grandchildren.
- Skype is used by some to communication with family living in other areas.
- Most use internet and will check your organization out on website before contacting.
- Like handwritten thank you notes.

#### *Communication expectations*

- Expect response to communication, but do not expect it to be immediately.
- Like clear, bulleted communication that is quick to read.

## **Generation X – Born 1965-1980**

- E-mail is a preferred communication. All have e-mail.
- Ask how they prefer to get communication. Many have multiple e-mail accounts with some used more than others.
- Most use Facebook.
- Many text, especially to communicate with family.
- Do not like to use abbreviations in e-mail and text as much as Millennials.
- Most have cell phones and also have home “land lines.” Most have answering machines.
- Ask whether to call to work or home and which place to leave voice mails.
- Blackberries/I-Phones common but not universal.

### *Communication expectations*

- Expect communication to be productive and concise.
- Look for time efficiencies such as piggy backing meetings.

## **Generation Y/ Millennials - Born 1981- ?**

- Use text as regular communication.
- Most use e-mail, though younger Millennials use it less.
- Use abbreviations in text and e-mail communication.
- Most have cell phones, and most do not also have a home “land line.”
- Seldom leave voice mail messages or check voice mail.
- Most are on Facebook
- Check websites and use web as a number one source of information.
- Income affects extent of electronics
  - Don't assume all have cell phones and text – income is a factor and some have had to give up cell phone because of the cost.
  - If can afford, many have iPhones, iPod Touch or others ways to connect to internet and e-mail with hand held devices for even more immediate communication.
- Like personal face to face communication. Like feedback.

### *Communication expectations*

- Expect quick communication. Are always checking for text and e-mails and expect you to also.