

5 Elements To An Effective Volunteer Agreement & Job Description

Volunteer Agreement & Job Description Template

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The challenges of leading volunteer teams are many and varied. Building your volunteer base with people who are energized by and aligned with your church's mission – and retaining those volunteers – can take all the hours in your week if not done intentionally and strategically.

Many church volunteers believe in and support the overall church vision, go through a membership or assimilation class, or even take spiritual gifts tests or volunteer training and still come out on the other side without a clear volunteer role in the church. So how can you get volunteers to be actively involved in service within your church and to clearly understand their volunteer role? The answer can actually be quite simple. Create a volunteer agreement and volunteer job descriptions.

Here are the five key elements you should include in a Volunteer Agreement and Volunteer Job Description:

1. Cast the vision.

Including the mission and vision of the church in your Volunteer Job Descriptions solidifies and unifies your volunteers in their understanding of not only what the church is about, but also how the church intends to carry out their mission. Verbally communicating your vision is great for motivating people, but over time it can become diluted or repetitive. Offering prospective

volunteers a written copy of the vision gives it clarity and intentionality. It also offers an opportunity for volunteers to buy into the vision and empowers them to be a part of it.

2. List your values.

Your church's values shape your church culture – both the staff culture and the volunteer culture. If you want to protect your church from becoming a second-rate or even toxic environment, then you need to rely not only on the leadership and staff but also on your volunteers to uphold the things you all hold dear as a community. For example, if one of your values is “People over performance,” then express that in your Volunteer Job Description and give examples of what that value looks like when it is lived out in your ministry context.

Give your volunteers permission to speak up – in love – to others serving in the church if they see the values being consistently disregarded. Invite them to be Christ-bearers by keeping the culture of your church a welcoming, truth-filled community committed to excellence.

3. Offer opportunities for volunteers to use their strengths.

You may already have purposes for each of your volunteer teams (i.e. hospitality team, tech team, facilities team, etc.), but you may not have gone so far as to clearly articulate in writing the goals of those teams and create roles within those teams. Consider developing a handful of roles for each of your teams that focus on different aspects of or needs within each of the ministries. This way, volunteers can choose what roles play into their natural strengths.

Here's an example for you: if you have a hospitality serve team, create a greeter role, a coffee bar attendant role, and a resource connector role with that team. Someone who is super friendly and outgoing would make an awesome greeter. They don't need to have long conversations or know everything about all areas of the church, so this is a great role for extroverts. A coffee attendant can be

more of a behind the scenes leader who can answer questions when necessary, and a resource connector will need to know a lot about the church and be able to have an engaging and possibly lengthy conversation with one person at a time. Each of these is a distinct role that will appeal to a different volunteer. In your job descriptions, explain what each role entails and what it takes to execute their responsibilities, and then let volunteers self-select where they feel their strengths lie.

4. Set clear expectations.

Include in the volunteer job descriptions all of the volunteer role's responsibilities, the person that role reports to, the amount of time their role will take on a typical Sunday, and any other expectations. Develop a system that allows volunteers to give their time without getting burnt out, and ensure that they have opportunities to get the rest and spiritual nourishment they need. Many churches have a "serve one, sit one" policy where they recommend that volunteers "sit" in one worship service as a participant and "serve" as a volunteer for the other weekend service. It's also a smart idea to specify how many weeks a month they will be put on their rotation.

Having these very clear expectations in writing not only informs and empowers the volunteer, it also gives permission to both parties to address unmet expectations. Have you ever volunteered somewhere and thought you would be entrusted with responsibility and influence, only to realize you were taking orders and stacking chairs? On the flip side, have you ever tried to manage a volunteer team where the members were chronically late, uninformed, or disengaged? It's disenchanting at best, at worst, it may cause people to stop serving or to leave the church altogether. To stay a healthy, thriving church, you have to be able to address those expectations and make necessary adjustments. Don't just appreciate your volunteers; empower them. Don't just ask them to show up; show you care.

5. Ask for a commitment.

When you give a volunteer a job description, treat it like a job offer. Ask them to take it home, read it, pray about it, and then let you know what they think. If



they're ready to accept, you should both sign the job description as an agreement. It may seem too formal, but the point isn't to tie your volunteer down or guilt them into good behavior. The point is to empower, set clear expectations, and prove to your volunteer that what they do matters. If their time and talents are treated seriously, they will feel the gravity of what they are a part of and have more buy in.

The more direct impact on the vision a volunteer feels they have, the more willing they will be to go above and beyond what is asked of them. It's also a great rule of thumb to refer to your volunteer teams by their team names and roles (i.e. Are you on a Serve Team?) and to refer to volunteers and staff in general as "the team." This unites everyone under one common vision and mission. Your congregation will feel empowered as leaders and be thrilled to join something bigger than themselves. Your "team" will never be the same!

Vanderbloemen Search Group is a pastor search firm that helps churches and faith-based organizations find great staff. If you'd like to talk about how we could help you build your team, contact us at info@vanderbloemen.com.

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Thank you for considering the opportunity to join the [CHURCH NAME] team in our mission to [MISSION STATEMENT]. We are thrilled you are a part of our community, and we can't wait to see how God uses you at [CHURCH NAME].

Mission:

Vision:

Beliefs:

Values:

[Volunteer Team Title]

[Describe what the purpose and goals of the team is and what is required of them as a group.]

[Volunteer Role Within The Team]

Location & Campus, if applicable:

Reports to: [List team leader's name and volunteer/staff title and contact information.]

Relates to: [List teams/roles that this person interacts with and/or supports.]

Key responsibilities:

-
-
-
-

Goals & Expectations:

-
-
-
-

Hours per week: [Hours required in preparation and on-site]

Days/services per month: [e.g. every other week rotation, once a month, etc.]

Profile: (List personal characteristics and gifts that would make someone uniquely suited for this role)

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-
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Agreement

I, _____, commit to fulfilling the responsibilities outlined in this role description for _____. I agree to serve my church in this capacity to the best of my abilities, partner with the church in our mission, and live out the church's vision through my actions. I agree to report any suspicious, unethical, or dangerous behavior witnessed to my volunteer leader. I will guard the church's reputation in the community and strive to reflect Christ in all my words and actions.

I, _____, leader of the church's _____ volunteer team, commit to caring for the physical, mental, and spiritual well-being of this valued volunteer and commission him/her to serve in obedience to Christ as a leader of this church. I agree to adequately equip and resource him/her for the responsibilities we ask him/her to fulfill. We agree to put him/her before performance and to address all questions, concerns, or mistakes with grace, truth, and love. The church leadership entrusts him/her with the responsibilities of this role and shares with him/her the responsibility to maintain and defend our beliefs, culture, and values so that our vision is unified and we reach our mission to [MISSION STATEMENT].

Volunteer Name	Signature	Date
Volunteer Team Leader Name	Signature	Date

Volunteer Contact Email:
Phone Number:
Emergency Contact:
Emergency Contact Phone Number: