

Transitioning from volunteer to employee: Two perspectives

Rebecca Ding and Daphne Horn, MI



Transitioning from volunteer to employee

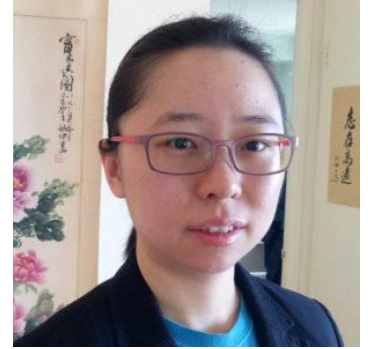
Overview of today's presentation:

- Volunteer landscape
- Transitioning from volunteer to employee
- Transitioning from supervisor to colleague
- Considerations for onboarding employees who were volunteers



Rebecca Ding

- Recently graduated with a Library Technician diploma from Seneca College
- Experiences prior to starting at Mount Sinai Hospital:
 - Volunteering
 - Contract work
 - Practicum while in college
- Volunteered at the Patient Education Pavilion for 5 months before being hired full-time work as a library technician



Daphne Horn



- Information Specialist at Sinai Health System (previously)
- Medical Librarian
- Also responsible for the Patient Education Pavilion
 - solely staffed by volunteers
 - no budget
- Volunteers recruited on the ischool job site at University of Toronto
 - students/newly graduated
 - retired
 - returning to profession



A person who gives up their free time to provide service for an organization or cause

Question

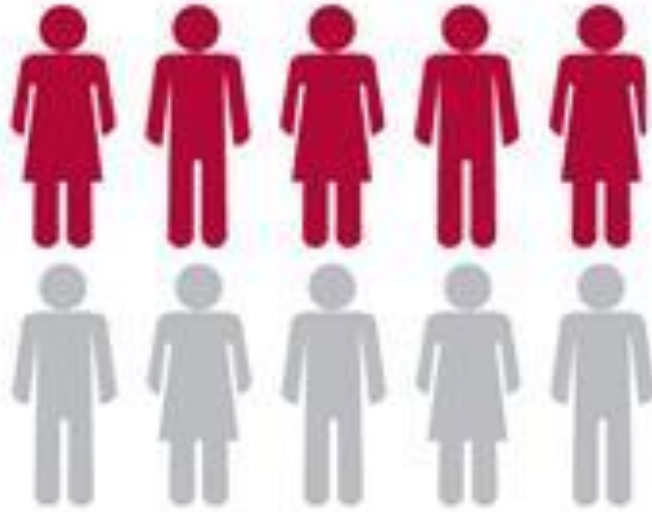
Altogether, the hours contributed by volunteers in Canada in 2013 is equivalent to how many full-time jobs?

- 10,000
- 50,000
- 500,000
- 1 million



1.1 

million full-time
equivalent jobs represented by
volunteering annually.



47%

of Canadians
volunteer.

Who volunteers?



Why Canadians volunteer

- to make a contribution to community (93%)
- to use skills and experience (78%)
- personally affected by the organization's cause (59%)
- to explore one's own strengths (48%)
- because their friends volunteer (48%)
- to network with others (46%)
- to improve job opportunities (22%)
- to fulfill religious obligations or beliefs



Research about volunteering in Canada. Sector Source. 2010

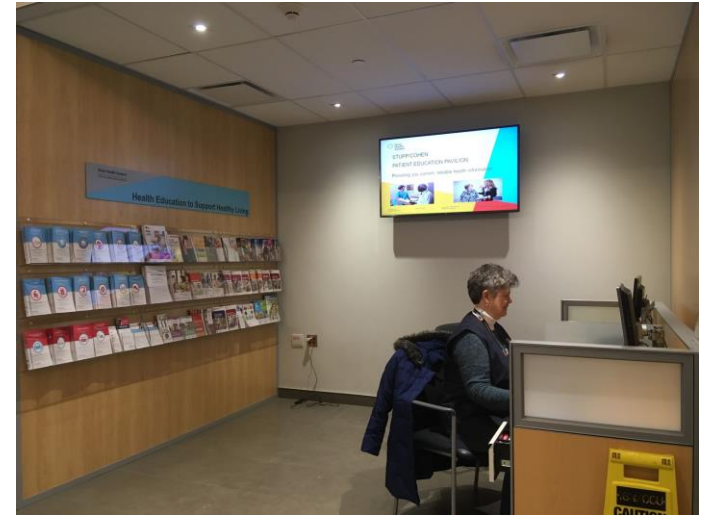
Volunteer environment

Volunteers are well established and appreciated in public libraries

Volunteers are increasingly used in special libraries to supplement or complement the work of paid staff

Volunteers are often attracted to the subject area the library specializes

Nearly 40% of American volunteers in the year ending September 2014 had a bachelor's degree or higher



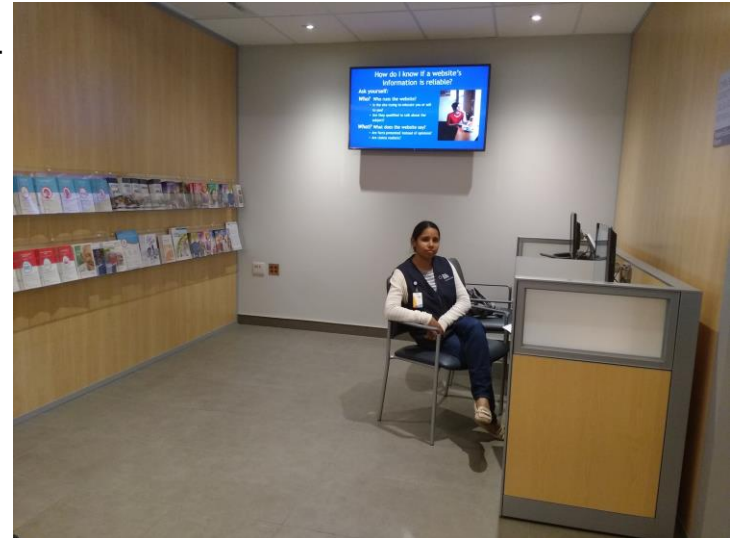
US Bureau of Labor Statistics,

Volunteers at Patient Education Pavilion

“The volunteer does not do what the professional is especially trained to do: answer reference questions”

- Lingle, 1984

*medical library staff are not trained to ‘*answer*’ medical reference questions



Difference between a volunteer and employee

Volunteers:

- Perform specific tasks
- Do not set priorities and direction for the library
- Are not a substitute for the professional expertise of a librarian

- Volunteer contributions can include subject expertise and links to the community
- can lead to increased community support, funding, and donations of material

Volunteer vs employee

More flexibility in hours worked

Shorter number of hours worked (in our case 3.5 hours/week)

Role less defined - large number of volunteers means more flexibility in picking tasks that resonate with their wants and needs



The debaters.....

Do you think people need to volunteer to get a job

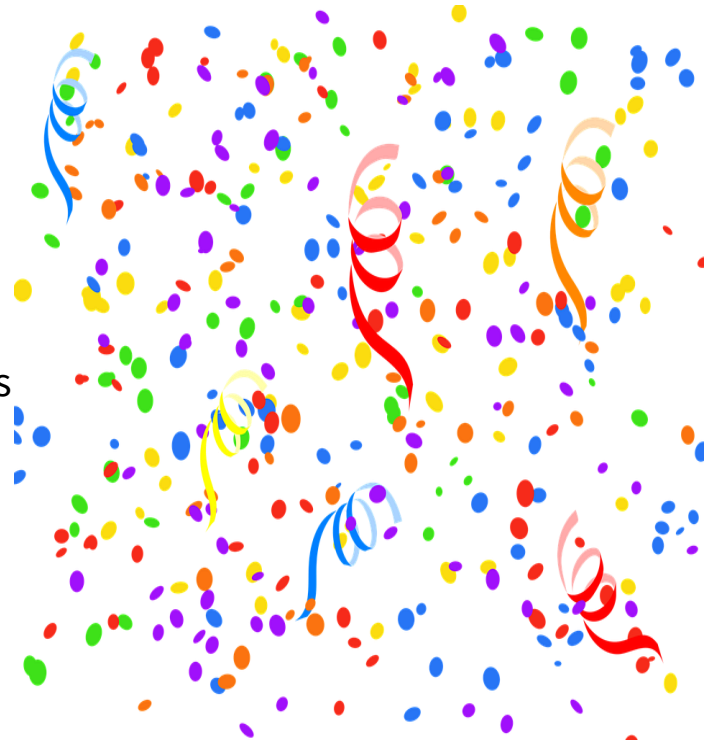
What are the advantages and disadvantages of this



Transitioning from volunteer to employee: New employee perspective

Congratulations! Your place of volunteering has decided to hire you.

- Compensation (monetary) for your work
- Familiarity with the organization
- Completed occupational health and safety requirements
- Opportunities to grow in your career with new responsibilities
- Sense of importance and value



Transitioning from volunteer to employee: Volunteer perspective

Realistically, there may be some hiccups in the transition from volunteer to employee, the literature suggests some problems may occur:

- Extra hours worked (3.5 to 35!) can change how the volunteer feels about the workplace/employees
- A volunteer can ignore things employees can't - mundane responsibilities, office politics, financial realities
- Relationships between the ex-volunteer and existing volunteers can change

Ellis, S. 2001

Transitioning from volunteer to employee: The personal trade-off

- Stability as a paid employee
- Able to continue parts of the same volunteer work
- Greater insight and contribution to workflow and goals
- More pressure and also support to adapt to work environment and learn tasks faster
- Less obligation and more flexibility as a volunteer
- Volunteers are routinely appreciated and thanked more as a social norm
- Able to learn new and diverse skills by working in special library volunteer positions

Transitioning from volunteer to employee: Recruitment

- Job posting
- Interview
- Job Offer



Transitioning from volunteer to employee: Employer perspective

You have hired a new employee! What next?

- Don't neglect employee orientation because you think they are familiar with the organization
- Be sensitive to appreciating new employees, and employees in general
- Manage your expectations
- Manage employee expectations
- Manage expectations/feelings of remaining volunteers



Transitioning from volunteer to employee

Some things to keep in mind when managing volunteers:

- Volunteer to employee isn't necessarily a promotion!
- Some volunteers don't want to be an employee
- Don't want volunteer experience to be an audition (Ellis, 2001)



In summary....

Volunteering can be a great way to gain experience and insight into different organizations. However you do need to be aware of some possible pitfalls if you are transitioning to an employee.

Hiring a volunteer can be a great way to add talent to your staff. However you need to be mindful of some possible problems in the recruitment and transition phases.

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