SR 953 – Research for the 21st Century

100-Day Assignment: Parts 1 and 2 (from the Syllabus)

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# Assignment

***100 Day – Essay Draft\*\****

**\*\*NOTE: According to the 100-Day instructions from the Syllabus (which were *confusing*), this assignment has two distinct parts: PART 1 - Online Trainings, followed by PART 2 - Structure. There are two lists of Works Cited: one for PART 1 and one for PART 2.**

**PART 1 INSTRUCTIONS (from the Syllabus)**

Complete the following online training programs. It is recommended that you take notes as you progress through the videos, blogs, or PowerPoint programs. Write a brief annotated outline for each level two heading (2-3 sentences) of what you learned from the online training sessions.

a. Strategies for variation in sentences (click on and review each topic under the Strategies for Variation headings [five topics])

1. Appropriate Language Overview (click on and review each topic under the heading [six topics])
2. Essay Writing (click on and review each topic under the Sentence Structure headings [five topics])
3. Rhetorical situations (click on and review each topic under the Rhetorical headings [eleven subheadings]. View the PowerPoint presentation (13 slides) under the Rhetorical Situations heading. View the Vidcast “Introduction to Rhetoric” and 14-minute video “In Defense of Rhetoric” (links provided in the first subheading section under Rhetorical Situations.
4. Four Main Components for Effective Outlines (click on and review each topic under the Developing an Outline headings [three topics])
5. Detailed APA PowerPoint Presentation (review the PowerPoint Presentation)

**PART 1: List of OWL Online Training Resources (my takeaways from the videos)**

A. *Strategies for Variation in Sentences*

1. Vary the rhythm by alternating short and long sentences.

2. Vary sentence openings.

B. *Appropriate Language: Overview*

1. Use language that fits your audience and matches purpose.

2. Avoid jargon and bias.

C. *Essay Writing*

There are four genres of essays (description, narration, exposition, and argumentation).

a. Expository - Investigates, evaluates, or expounds

b. Descriptive - Asks a student to describe something

c. Narrative - Tells a story

d. Intends to persuade the reader

D. *Rhetorical Situations*

1. “Rhetoric” is any communication used to modify the perspectives of others.

2. Understanding rhetoric helps us better communicate and evaluate situations.

E. *Four Main Components for Effective Outlines*

1. For first-level heads, present the information using all upper-case letters.

2. For secondary and tertiary items, use upper and lower-case letters.

3. All the information contained in Heading 1 should have the same significance as the information contained in Heading 2. The same goes for the subheadings (which should be less significant than the headings).

4. The information in the headings should be more general, while the information in the subheadings should be more specific.

F. *Detailed APA PowerPoint Presentation*

1. The American Psychological Association (APA) citation style is the most commonly used format for manuscripts in the social sciences.

2. APA regulates:

a. Stylistics

b. In-text citations

c. References

Works Cited

Purdue Writing Lab. (n.d.). *Strategies for variation in sentences // Purdue writing lab*.

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general\_writing/academic\_sentence\_variety/index.html

Purdue Writing Lab. (n.d.). *Appropriate language: overview // Purdue Writing Lab*. https://owl.purdue.edu/owlgeneral\_writing/academic\_writing/using\_appropriate\_language/index.html

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Purdue Online Writing Lab. (n.d.). *Rhetorical situations // Purdue writing lab.*

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Purdue Online Writing Lab. (n.d.). *Four main component for effective outlines // Purdue writing*

*lab.*

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general\_writing/the\_writing\_process/developing\_an\_outline/index.html

Purdue Online Writing Lab. (n.d.). *Detailed APA PowerPoint presentation // Purdue writing lab.*

<https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/apa_powerpoint_slide_presentation.html>

**PART 2 INSTRUCTIONS (from the Syllabus)**

**2. Structure (Assignment evaluation includes the following structure below).**

1. Download the “OGS APA Course Assignments Template 7th Ed 2021” template from the **General Helps** folder in the AA-101 The Gathering Place Course on DIAL. Using the template, create the following pages.
2. Title Page (not included in page count).
3. Copy and paste the assignment instructions from the syllabus starting on a new page after the title page, adhering to APA 7th edition style (APA 7 Workshop, Formatting, and Style Guide, APA 7 Quick Guide).
4. Start the assignment on a new page after the copied assignment instructions.
5. Document all sources in APA style, 7th edition (APA 7 Reference Example, APA  7 Quick Guide)
6. Include a separate **Works Cited** page, formatted according to APA  style, 7th edition

3. Submit through **DIAL** to the professor.

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100-Day Assignment

Community Volunteers: Overcoming Post-Pandemic Challenges

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Submission Date: June 21, 2023

**Community Volunteers: Overcoming Post-Pandemic Challenges**

**Introduction**

While the COVID-19 pandemic may not be fully to blame for reduced volunteerism, community volunteer recruitment efforts face challenges in a post-pandemic world because individuals are hesitant to participate in-person, and organizations are hesitant to utilize volunteers despite the great need and benefits to all.

Bear Valley Community Hospital (BVCH) is the smallest hospital in California.   
The hospital is located in Big Bear Lake, a rural mountain community with a poverty level of 30%. In addition to operational challenges posed by both location and economics, the hospital regularly needs equipment not provided for in its annual budget. To assist with meeting these needs, BVCH’s Foundation raises funds from donors in the community. Unlike urban hospital Foundations, whose staff consists of paid professionals, the BVCH Foundation is comprised of 100% volunteers. I presently hold the office of Foundation Co-Vice President.

Until 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic prompted health officials to issue stay-at-home orders, the BVCH Foundation had hosted frequent in-person fundraising events throughout the year. Despite the limited pool of financially capable local donors, fundraising goals were always met and were frequently exceeded.

In the midst of the pandemic’s chaos, our little hospital was coping with staffing shortages, equipment shortages and an overflow of COVID-19 patients in respiratory distress. During this same period, the BVCH Foundation’s fundraising activities ground to a halt and our robust membership dwindled. Only a single fundraising event remained possible: the annual *Tree of Lights* ceremony scheduled for November, 2020. Undeterred, a small core of Foundation members were able to meet online and at socially-distanced, fully-masked meetings on members’ porches. During these intense sessions the event was strategically transformed from one in which attendees––who had traditionally been seated in rows of chairs––would instead be confined to their personal vehicles, parked in rows (similar to a drive-in movie theater). A “virtual” version of the event was also planned to stream live on social media. Although the 2020 *Tree of Lights* ceremony was a success––and was especially poignant during pandemic upheaval––other large-scale Foundation events for 2021 and beyond proved difficult and challenging to produce.

During the present *post*-pandemic era, our hospital’s immediate public health crisis has subsided despite continued staff shortages. Yet the Foundation’s volunteer membership has not recovered. In order to continue helping our hospital with unfulfilled equipment needs, it is essential for membership numbers to increase.

This paper discusses the adaptive efforts of a 100% volunteer organization to recruit new members from the community in a post-pandemic era of lingering uncertainty.

**Subject Keyword Search**

Search terms related to the topic of this paper are as follows:

1. COVID-19 pandemic and community events
2. Post-pandemic fundraising challenges
3. Post-pandemic volunteer recruitment
4. Post-pandemic organizational changes
5. Post-pandemic community needs
6. Community volunteering and personal fulfillment

**Overcoming Post-Pandemic Challenges and Building Back Better**

The health of an entire community depends on its volunteers. While the COVID-19 pandemic may not be fully to blame for reduced volunteerism, community volunteer recruitment efforts face challenges in a post-pandemic world because individuals are hesitant to participate in-person, and organizations fear risk in utilizing volunteers despite the great need and benefits to all. In this paper, we will address the following questions:

1) How can the perception of community volunteering be changed in order to increase the number of an organization’s volunteers?

2) What role do nonprofit leaders play in retaining and recruiting community volunteers?

In order to answer these research questions, we must explore why people volunteer and also why they leave or stay.

As a DSL candidate, mindful that I will be pursuing an action research project, I have narrowed my focus of study to an organization in which I have direct access for future participatory research: the Bear Valley Community Hospital Foundation. However, my preliminary steps are broader and involve the evaluation of research that has come before.

During the present post-pandemic era, our local hospital’s most dramatic public health crisis has subsided despite continued staff shortages. Yet the Foundation’s volunteer membership has not recovered. In order to continue helping our hospital with unfulfilled equipment needs, it is essential for membership numbers to increase.

As Vice President of the Foundation, I am taking it upon myself to analyze effective ways to grow our membership base. Based on the findings of this preliminary research, in my eventual Capstone project I will document the effectiveness of adaptive efforts made by the volunteer leaders of our 100% volunteer organization to recruit new members from the community in a post-pandemic era of lingering uncertain duration. In this paper I examine several scholarly sources of current existing research on volunteer retention and the role of nonprofit leaders in maintaining a strong base of community volunteers. This strengthening is more critical in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

While the pandemic is certainly not fully to blame for reduced volunteerism, community volunteer recruitment efforts face challenges in a post-pandemic world because individuals have become hesitant to participate in-person, and organizations have become hesitant to utilize volunteers despite the need and benefits to all (Colibaba et al., 2022, p. 5). Community volunteers rely on nonprofit leaders to insure their safety while providing opportunities for meaningful engagement. One psychological factor that provides meaning to volunteers is “the sense of ownership one holds toward the organization” (Ainsworth, 2020, p. 2). With the feeling of ownership, one is less likely to abandon that which they own. While, as Ainsworth asserts, “the sense of ownership may be generated by those involved in volunteering” (p. 3), I maintain that the psychological perception of volunteers’ ownership must first be cultivated and overtly encouraged by a nonprofit organization’s leadership.

During the pandemic, nonprofit leaders who successfully retained volunteers did so by fostering a sense of psychological identity (Wakefield, et al., 2022, p. 909). Wakefield’s research demonstrated that a community’s perception of volunteering can be enhanced by those leaders who promote volunteer safety and identity. Leaders who failed to cultivate a culture of safety and identity risk diminished community perception of volunteering, thereby limiting their ability to retain and recruit volunteers (Wakefield, p. 917). Nonprofit leaders must embrace both safety and identity in order to successfully retain and recruit community volunteers in this post-pandemic era.

Nonprofit leaders can also enhance retention and motivation of volunteers by acknowledging their need for a sense of “calling” (Falethan et al, (2021, p. 1). Volunteers want to see their efforts as valuable and purposeful. The concept of one’s calling is rooted throughout human history’s quest for meaningful work (p. 19). Leadership practices that promote the concept of calling could thereby inspire volunteers to remain longer with their organizations and continue to produce needed work (p. 17).

Bilan (2019) argues that, “…volunteer uncertainty is also related to the lack of social connections within the organization, most often with other volunteers, and is defined as volunteer isolation” (p. 14). Social connection was disrupted (and often severed completely) during the height of the pandemic. Contextually, in the case of our Hospital Foundation, this disconnection resulted in the attrition of our volunteer base – 85% of whom never returned. Therefore, I have taken careful note of Bilan’s statement that “the sense of satisfaction gained from previous volunteering experiences could serve as a motive for future voluntary activities and contribute to the intention to participate in future voluntary work” (p.4).

Farny, et al., (2019) argue that, “In managing a venture’s volunteer membership base, prior volunteerism research suggests that entrepreneurs are required to apply personalized (instead of formalized) management styles that are protective rather than bureaucratic in nature” (p. 3). The authors also recommend that a nonprofit’s leaders utilize a democratic, participative style (p. 2) and that “…emotional connectivity depends on the practices [leaders] undertake to manage conflicting organizational duality orientations and volunteers’ experiences thereof” (p. 12).

Yet motivation is only one piece of the puzzle for our Hospital Foundation. Prior to the pandemic, our active member base was already small (18 members). Of that pool, 5 of us were unpaid board directors. As Jackson et al., (2019) observed, inadequate staff plays a role in the failure to attract and retain volunteer members (p. 25).

On the recruitment side, nonprofit leaders have successfully recruited new members by finding them where they already are instead of sitting back and hoping to be found. Arka et al., (2022) found that “Most volunteers dedicate their efforts to work that is related to their personal interests and hobbies such as sports, or cultural activities” (p. 2). Relating this to the Hospital Foundation, our community has seven service clubs, a historical society, three gyms, and a senior center. All of these entities are potential sources of new volunteers. In order to find those volunteers, our Foundation’s leaders must pursue them. Service clubs represent successful community volunteer management. Kalinka (2020) writes about Rotary International, whose motto is “Service Above Self” (p. 2). Utilizing the Servant-Leadership Model, Kalinka explains that, “Servant leaders dispense with positional authority and rely upon the power of persuasion. They seek to convince others rather than coerce compliance” (p. 21). Yet, while a more egalitarian approach is essential, some form of structure provides volunteers a sense of stability – preferably presented as a balance of structure and support (Mason et al., 2022).

Merrilees et al., (2020) address the Transformational Leadership Style, coupled with the concept of branding (p. 24).

As Kimble (2020) notes, “Recruitment activities that involve some form of personal contact with another person were reported to be more effective regardless of age or years of service” (p. 2). And this is where our small-town setting could provide an advantage, because – as the small-town saying goes – everyone knows someone who knows someone!

In the zeal to recruit new volunteers from existing sources, it is vital that efforts be made to encompass diversity. Lockstone-Binney et al., (2022) bring this point home by declaring that, “in attempting to grow the volunteer pool, volunteer participation may not be as inclusive and accessible for those with differing profiles” (p. 14).

Revisiting the retention side, Cho et al., (2020) emphasize the high turnover rate of volunteers, whose unpaid labor must be rewarded in non-monetary ways, necessitating that nonprofit leaders emphasize “positive experiences of their volunteers to enhance their motivation” (p. 3). Indeed, volunteers must feel rewarded and appreciated for their efforts.

Nonprofit leaders must make efforts to improve satisfaction within their volunteer ranks. Yet they should refrain from feeling a burden of guilt by realizing that “the main reasons volunteers stop volunteering are due to external circumstances (such as scheduling conflicts, moving away, etc.) that are not preventable by the organization” (Kuhn et al., 2019).

**Conclusion**

In our post-pandemic world, it is essential for nonprofit leaders to protect, promote, and empower their volunteers in order to maximize retention and pave the way for greater recruitment of new volunteers. As I contextualize the research findings above and connect them to the volunteer retention/recruitment shortcomings at our Hospital Foundation (and the vital role that we play in raising funds for needed equipment), it affirms my statement that the health of an entire community depends on its volunteers. Our organization’s leadership plays a vital role in community health. If our leadership fosters nurturance of existing volunteers while recruiting new volunteers strategically from groups with aligned interests, I am reassured that we can change the perception of volunteering with our important cause and am confident that – by building upon the evidenced successes of others – our Hospital Foundation *can* build back better.

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