



VolunteerMatch

**Learning Pathways  
Impact Storytelling  
Part 1: For Your Organization**



# Welcome!

This is a new format for learning at VolunteerMatch

- Designed for more participation.
- All resources and slides will be available afterwards.
- I want to hear your feedback!
- Please register for all Parts of a Learning Pathway – they build on each other.

# Questions on Part 1?

**6 questions**  
**2 upvotes**

What story do you tell to  
your organization?



## What positive things do others in your organization think/know about volunteers?

That they are there to help!

A lot of our volunteers have been members of our organization as girls and now are volunteering as adults.

Great help

They bring their hearts with them, making us a warmer space.

care about the mission

We could not do all we do without them.

They are dedicated

That volunteers are the lifeblood of our organization. We can't run our pantry without them

## What positive things do others in your organization think/know about volunteers?

That they are dedicated, friendly, helpful, knowledgeable, important to our programs

That they want to contribute to our mission.

they are upbeat

They give their time to enrich others and give back to their community

That they are staff just like us.

Helps support community awareness

That they are dedicated to our mission and willing to donate.

Vital to our carrying out of mission and programs.

# What positive things do others in your organization think/know about volunteers?

They are passionate about our organization and eager to help.

Bring new ideas for events

Share our values and mission

They are free

That they are willing to sacrifice time and efforts to save lives.

dedicated volunteers

they are amazing and go out their way to help

They are parents to our clients



## What positive things do others in your organization think/know about volunteers?

Some of our vols. are very committed.

They are very valuable in assisting in providing services to our patients and organization.

They are instrumental in running our food pantries. They are passionate about serving our community.

Mission minded.

Lots have been around for many, many years and have incredible knowledge of the organization.

It's a great way to spread our mission because they are awesome advocates

the kids love them!

Our program couldn't run without our volunteers.



# What positive things do others in your organization think/know about volunteers?

They further our mission and have fun doing it.

They simply just want to help the community and support in any way they can

They are fun to be around. They are dedicated and loyal.

They believe volunteers are essential to daily functions of the organization

They care about our participants. They just want to help and bring an energy to our programs that sometimes is lacking in paid staff.

They're all in and make everything happen. They model vulnerability which creates a unique and inviting environment.

Student volunteers provide support, but we get to show them non profit organizations. We even hire them!

They are compassionate and love volunteering

## What positive things do others in your organization think/know about volunteers?

They want to support their community to make it a better place to live!

Some have been around longer than staff members!

Make a big impact serving home bound seniors

Can fill many different needs for organization.

You can't count on them like staff to show up to things.

They're not always reliable.

Taking away work from staff.

They are there to do the work that staff members don't want to do



## What positive things do others in your organization think/know about volunteers?

They sometimes forget how important they are to our organization.

That we are "stuck" with bad volunteers

That they can be hard to deal with.

Hard to rely on, some feel they have ultimate say when assigned as "event chair"

Difficult to work with.

That contacting volunteers to complete tasks is not worth it and its just easier to do it yourself

They are not always reliable

more trouble than they're worth

# What positive things do others in your organization think/know about volunteers?

Some volunteers are green and not trained. They ghost us and bring their own set of ideas on how to run things.

They are unable to commit

That they can be put anywhere and do anything, even if it isn't something they're trained to do or expect to do, that they never get sick, that they are unreliable, they take up time, they are needy

Can ask volunteers to do things that aren't a good fit for them, just because staff doesn't want to do that.

Use many resources (time, staff)

They are more work than they contribute.

Sometimes not reliable, it's all about status and ranking for certain opportunities, us vs. them mentality.

That they will be able to use them whenever they needed them, instead of when they are available.



## What positive things do others in your organization think/know about volunteers?

They don't read communications (given in a variety of forms) and then say they are not receiving information.

Turnover takes a lot of my time. Hard to find substitutes and aren't available.

Volunteers can feel they have ultimate say when assigned as "event chair"

The majority of our volunteers are seniors and some of our staff believes that they don't have the proper skills.

That they are supposed to be "saving" staff time, that they should be able to do anything the staff do (even if they are only here a few hours a week compared to 35 for staff!)

Won't complete surveys that could help to improve the vol program.

Won't complete basic registration. Need a lot of training.

Not willing to learn new rules, and not adaptive.

## What positive things do others in your organization think/know about volunteers?

takes a lot of time to train them

Using testimonials from our alums and how involvement in our organization has impacted their future plans.

Showing what soft skills can be earned and honed through involvement.

Surveys after volunteers attend events



## What negative ideas or beliefs does your organization have about volunteers?

they are a liability, they are flaky

They are unreliable and don't provide value

Sometimes not reliable because they may register but not show up

they take too much time/work to train

volunteers will just "show up" or be available when we want them b/c "our work is important"

They take up staff's time.

They are there to do the work that staff members don't want to do

They don't have the skill set needed

## What negative ideas or beliefs does your organization have about volunteers?

They're not always reliable.

Not reliable or seem to cancel alot.

They don't do the work up to our standards.

They have made staff members cry or quit the organization.

unable to commit

They overstep boundaries or do things that go against our operations

They do low skill work comparative to staff

Sometimes more trouble than they're worth.



# What negative ideas or beliefs does your organization have about volunteers?

Staff seems to think they are for the jobs staff doesn't want to do.

Sometimes want to act like staff if are.  
Experienced in the field.

That they are able to do anything we ask, that they can do things that aren't fun (that staff won't want to do), that they are unreliable, needy

They have negative beliefs about the people we serve.

lifetime volunteers are more important than the new staff

Entitlement. Seasoned volunteers insist on doing things their way and refuse to change. Had some even chew out staff and threaten to sue staff for not treating them fairly.

Unreliable...cancel often. Picky about what they'll do.

Not knowledgeable enough in our mission to do certain tasks

# What negative ideas or beliefs does your organization have about volunteers?

That they are there to "save staff time" and should be able to do anything staff do without the same amount of time training/doing.

Us vs. them mentality among volunteers, volunteer leaders and staff

complain alot

That we are "stuck" with problematic volunteers.

Sometimes only want selective tasks and don't want to do low skilled tasks.

programs don't need paid staff, we can "just have a volunteer do those things"

Volunteer being board members and having conflict of interest.

Ask too many questions.



# What negative ideas or beliefs does your organization have about volunteers?

challengers

Stories from the client about how the volunteers helped them

Reminders of the mission and ultimate goals. What they are working for and their impact.

showing how much more we are able to do with volunteers - hard numbers

Monthly newsletter

# What do you want to say?

- Do you have goals for the volunteer engagement program?
- Do you have a personal or organizational philosophy for volunteer engagement?
- Is volunteer engagement part of your organization's strategic plan or initiatives?



# Who are your stakeholders?

“I’m evaluating our volunteer engagement program.  
I’d love to get your ideas”

- One-on-one conversations
- Opportunity for you to learn – don’t defend or attempt to change minds.

Group stakeholders into champions, those seeking more information, and those opposed to expanding volunteer engagement.

# A Note About Volunteers

Your existing volunteers are also stakeholders!

- Volunteers have ownership or control over programs
- Hard to introduce new volunteers to shifts or teams
- Attitudes hold the culture hostage
- Intergenerational communication issues



# Creating a Stakeholder Continuum

Are there themes or trends? If they want more information what kind of information are they looking for?

- Case studies
- Pilot programs
- Feedback from existing volunteers

Communicate out about the process

- What are you doing to ensure that you find the right volunteer for each position?

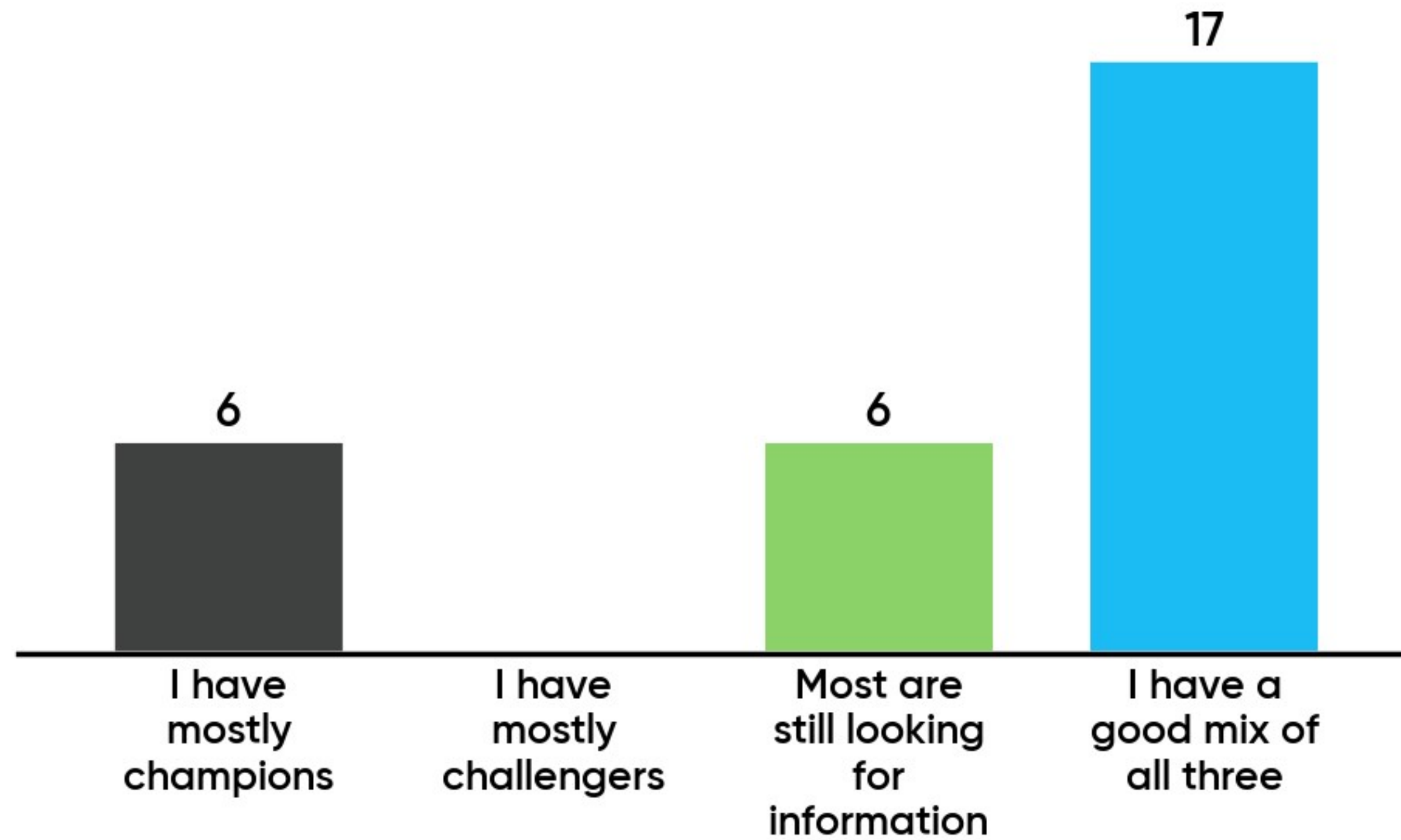
# Creating a Stakeholder Continuum

Create ongoing communications to share information about the work:

- Successes and challenges
- Ongoing work on pilot programs
- New processes or better screening and training plans
- New positions
- And – of course – recognition!



# How do your stakeholders align?



## What information or actions might be persuasive?

the impact of their fundraising

Show how many clients they serve each week.

articles in newsletters.  
Small group trainings.

quotes from volunteers

We built/created our own volunteer management system so we can track all volunteer information - hours, number of volunteers, impact, etc. We haven't been able to completely tell our story.

Impact they make

donuts at meetings

Inviting the volunteers to IDT meetings so that the team can hear their stories and the impact they have.



## What information or actions might be persuasive?

reminders of their impact and the mission of the agency

Impact on participant attendance from volunteers inviting them personally to programs

We invite volunteers and participants to share their stories at board meetings, fundraisers

semi annual breakfasts with CEO to relay progress toward the mission

statistics and data. For us, number of meals delivered by volunteers and money that the program saves is important.

financials

Direct interactions with clients and how it impacted them. What matters to them and how that can influence others.

Impact in our community because of volunteers

## What information or actions might be persuasive?

Authenticity and vulnerability across the board

Sharing organizational goals and how we're tracking toward them

Also, the impact of our seasonal volunteers (students during semesters) and how that impacts serving the community. We need more new volunteers in the summer and semester breaks.

personal stories from other volunteers and clients receiving our services..

How our volunteers have grown with our organization-meaning their volunteer career

white board in food pantry newsletter emails

Marketing for social media-pics of what volunteers are doing.

Our Workforce Development Team, Marketing/Communications.



## What information or actions might be persuasive?

We also use Microsoft Teams.

# Building Your Story



Your story should reflect the values and culture of your organization.

- Be authentic.
- Stay true to your mission and your work.

What matters in your organization?

- What do your volunteers, donors, clients tell you is most important about the work you do?

# Stakeholders Communications Planning Worksheet

Who is the stakeholder?	Where do they align?	What matters to them?	What information could be persuasive?	What result or outcome do they care about?



## What tactics or information could inform your story?

My personal journey

Positive changes in the community because of our work.

financials

How I went from volunteering to staff and how they can do the same

Stats and data. How many meals we serve that are delivered by volunteers and how that saves our agency money that we would pay drivers

Data driven analytics to show tangible growth

Success stories

What happens because of volunteer efforts that they don't get to see after they've gone home.

## What tactics or information could inform your story?

Impact to our community.

Some of our staff's stories and how it pertains to wanting to give back to their community

Our volunteer impact throughout the year

our website, blog post features



# Where can you share this information?

Who else in your organization is telling a story?

- Marketing/Communications
- Fundraising/Development
- Executive Leadership – ED or Board Members
- Volunteers
- Clients, Community Members, Supporters

## Where can you collaborate or share information?

Monthly newsletter

Social media through marketing

blog posts

Website and orientations

Newsletter; board updates

Quarterly meetings, bi-monthly newsletters

orientations

white board at food pantry  
social media  
emails newsletters



## Where can you collaborate or share information?

Newsletter, social media, festivals, job fairs, church events, board meetings, etc.

Better coordination across programs and means of engagement so we know internally the full picture of a supporter's engagement. Great info story-telling and engaging others

feel better

# For Next Time:

Explore the Resource Packet:

- Can the worksheets help you start conversations?
- What additional resources do you need, what resources do you have to share?
- Fill out the Feedback Form!
- Join the LinkedIn Group to share ideas, ask questions, get support.



# Thank You!

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