

Tool Box



Getting Campaign Volunteers in SHIPshape

As we chart our courses for 2010, there are some encouraging signs that the financial waters are beginning to calm. The market is keeping its head above 10,000 and whispers of optimism can be heard in communities across the country. It's time to assemble our crews and cast off for another year of making a difference.

The Crew For many non-profits, the crew is made up of a small number of staff and a large number of volunteers. It is these volunteers who are often best positioned to communicate our mission, testify to our impact and engage others in supporting our worthwhile causes. Without a dedicated and educated team of volunteers, many a campaign has been blown off course and run aground. Before a dollar is raised, volunteers must be recruited, motivated and trained. Skip this vital step in your campaign and it could be over before it even starts!

In our work with non-profits across North America, the **Donor by Design** Team has the honor of working with thousands of volunteers each year. Through surveys, face-to-face visits and a continual feedback loop, we have learned a thing or two about successful volunteer recruitment.

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In keeping with this issue's nautical theme, here's a simple acronym to keep you on course when recruiting volunteers: **S.H.I.P** (Specific, Honest, Individual, Pledged support)

Specific What are you *really* asking them to do? To be as clear and concise as possible, you must **provide prospective volunteers with a written job description, timeline and goals**. We know that some of the top reasons volunteers say "no" is a fear of not knowing the plan, being unclear on what they are being asked to do and fear of the time commitment involved. Make sure your job descriptions answer all of those questions.

Honest We have all been guilty of understating the true commitment we are expecting of our volunteers. We fear that telling them the full story may scare them away. Just the opposite is true. An open and honest conversation about the importance of the campaign and the critical role the volunteer can play will excite, motivate and encourage prospective volunteers.

Everyone wants to feel important and needed. Speaking of honesty, have you asked volunteers to make their own financial commitment before sending them to ask others?

Individual Make each volunteer recruitment experience personal and specific to person you are talking to. **Make sure to communicate why you need them.** What special gifts, skills and talents do they possess which will make them a critical member of the team? There is a great difference between saying "we need people to help out" and saying "you have such a passion for our mission and have such a gift for connecting with people that we need you if we are to be successful this year."



Pledge your ongoing support

No one wants to fail - which is the number one reasons volunteers say no. **You need to have a clear plan** in place to ensure your volunteers are trained, coached and supported during the campaign. If you don't have a training plan, system for ongoing communication and feedback, you have no business asking these people to climb aboard.

Take advantage of our toolbox full of **free** fundraising resources, including volunteer tools, at donorbydesign.com.

Keep the conversation going by becoming a fan of Donor by Design on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/donorbydesign) or following us on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/donorbydesign).

