



Castlegar
Neighbourhood
House

Characteristics of Volunteering Today

Bridging the Gap

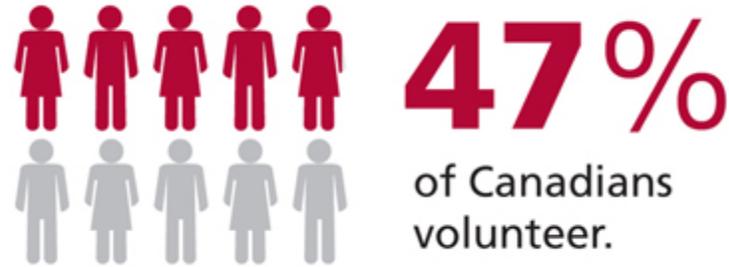
Summary of Findings of a Pan - Canadian Research Study 2010

<https://volunteer.ca/content/bridging-gap-summary-report>

Volunteer Canada, in partnership with Manulife Financial, Carleton University Centre for Voluntary Sector Research & Development and Harris/Decima



Did you know ?



The [2010](#) stats show that 47% (or over 13 million) volunteer. In total 2 billion hours were volunteered, the equivalent of 1.1 million full time jobs. On average, volunteers contributed 156 hours each (roughly 21 working days).

Despite these enviable statistics, connecting with those volunteers is proving to be a difficult and growing challenge. There is much competition for volunteers amongst organizations and it is relatively easy for volunteers to find opportunities in the community.



Characteristics of Volunteers

- ▶ Volunteering Changes Throughout Our Lifecycle

What volunteer opportunities Canadians seek evolves during our lifetime with changing priorities and circumstances related to the demands of school, work, and family. For example, parents may be volunteering in their children's activities, or with an organization related to the illness of a family member, and volunteers often withdraw when this direct link no longer is applicable to their lives. Organizations need to find ways to help people make the transition to supporting broader community issues.

- ▶ Volunteers Today Are Different

Today's Canadians tend to be more goal-oriented and have greater structure in their school, work, family, and social lives. They are mobile, technologically savvy, value autonomy, and have multiple interests and roles within the community.

- ▶ *Volunteering is a Two-Way Relationship*

The research uncovered a common emphasis on the need for reciprocity in the volunteer relationship. That is, the goals of the volunteer should be addressed while at the same time considering the needs of the organization. Respondents indicated a preference for having these mutual needs openly expressed, negotiated and met whenever possible.

Gaps in Attracting Volunteers



The primary gaps identified by the research were:

- ▶ Many people are looking for group activities ***BUT few organizations have the capacity to offer them;***
- ▶ Many people come with professional skills ***BUT many professionals are looking for volunteer tasks that involve something different from their work life;***
- ▶ Organizations are expected to clearly define the roles and boundaries of volunteers ***BUT many volunteers want the flexibility to initiate what they have to offer (i.e., create their own volunteer opportunity);***
- ▶ Many organizations still want long-term commitment ***BUT many more volunteers are looking for shorter-term opportunities;***
- ▶ Many organizations focus on what they need ***BUT besides helping others, many volunteers come with their own goals to be met.***

Meeting the above needs takes a great deal of Time, Energy and Coordination !

Advice to Organizations



- Build meaningful relationships with volunteers
- Develop integrated HR strategies that include volunteer management
- Be flexible and accommodating with volunteers –Be sensitive to gender, culture, language and age
- Provide greater online engagement –
- Develop customized, balanced approach to engagement

How can technology play a role in supporting Volunteerism and meeting some of the gaps and challenges ?

Lets take a look at one Solution –

Better Impact Volunteer Management Software

- <https://app.betterimpact.com/Organization/Main>
- Username: KFPVolunteers Password: acaMbaCf

