

Non-Profit Causes

Recruiting Generation Y to Give and Get Involved

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Some thoughts on recruiting 20-somethings to your non-profit cause. As a member of both a non-profit board and Generation Y, this is what I have to say about my peers.

- We are passionate.
- We are independent and challenge authority.
- We usually have a lot of debt and manage money poorly.
- We are generous with what we do have.
- We are online a lot and often prefer online communication to phone, e-mail, or in-person meetings.
- We work hard and demand a lot from the people we work with.
- We are risk-takers and get frustrated with slow change.
- We care about both aesthetic and function.
- We have a hard time seeing other perspectives.

Volunteering: Pushing the Chips All In

The quickest way to lose a volunteer is to overwork them and fail to show gratitude. When recruiting Gen Y volunteers, consider that you're competing for our time. We're often building a career and working well over 40 hours a week. We're also trying to maintain a social life, traveling, or have new families to care for. Asking too much is a sure-fire way of turning us off to volunteering.

We'd love to help, though. So create entry points with specific tasks and roles for us. We'd love to help manage that marketing project, or organize the food for that fundraiser. If we get really interested, we'll let you know we want to help out more.

Don't forget to thank your volunteers, of course. If we don't think we're making a difference, we'll give up.

Cradle to Grave: Donors of Tomorrow

I heard from a non-profit marketer recently that their organization was considering Gen Y and how we fit into their overall strategy. The head of the group argued that Gen Y doesn't have any

money and isn't worth his time. He's right, but not for the reason he expects. His skill is in working with major donors. He can raise more before breakfast than all of the Gen Y gifts combined. But that's not the point.

Gen Y is the major donor base of the future. Your major donors and volunteers were 20-somethings once. They built companies and careers and wealth, just as the current batch of recent college graduates are trying to do. They will often take a different path to get there, but they'll build their wealth over time. As they do, you'll wish you started engaging them earlier and developing your relationships from the beginning. Cradle to grave.

Consider also the thousands of small gifts that some political candidates have sought. A gift of \$50 is a lot easier to get than \$50,000, and when you get 1,000 donors to give the \$50, it's just the same. And then you'll have 1,000 donors to grow and cultivate into larger investors in your mission.

Gen Y Opens a Lot of Doors

It makes a lot of sense to recruit from Generation Y. So go on and sign up for a Facebook account. Ask your recent college graduate nephew to organize a project with some friends. Or work with a local college to find interns, or service groups. The passion we bring to our work will help uplift your organization's spirits. We bring new networks of potential volunteers and donors. We have a different perspective on the things you've been doing, which can lead to innovative programming and marketing. And as we develop our resources, you'll have access to those as well.