

NORTH OF TYNE VOLUNTEERING AREA OF EXCELLENCE

USING VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

(WITH THANKS TO SUNDERLAND SOFTWARE CITY)

WHAT IS VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT?

- Anything that incorporates interactions between volunteers and an organisation
 - ◇ Streamline logistics and processes
- A system that allows voluntary organisations to build long-term, strategic relationships with individuals

WHAT IS A VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM?

- A platform which helps with recruitment, communications, engagement and scheduling for volunteers as well as more bespoke options depending on the system itself
- “everything you need to know about your volunteers in one place”
- A system to help maintain compliance with industry-specific regulations
- A mechanism to improve retention rates with volunteers by keeping them more informed and encouraged by the charity’s ongoings
 - ◇ A way of finding out what a volunteer’s primary skills are, what their talents are and where they’d like to be placed within your organisation
 - ◇ A means of enabling the organisation to place skill-based volunteers and make options such as digital volunteerism a possibility
- The Volunteer Management System can have front-facing portals for volunteers to interact with their own profiles, schedules and internal communications
- Data tracking and automated reporting are usually included to keep track of the activities of your volunteers
- Some Volunteer Management Systems can generate custom reports to show patterns of volunteering and to quantify the impact of your volunteers
- Systems can you let you track and practice means of acknowledgement, ensuring volunteers do not feel forgotten or underappreciated
 - ◇ As an example, the Give Blood initiative uses a system which automatically sends a text to volunteers a few days after they have given blood thanking them for their donation and letting them know where/how their blood is being used to help save lives.
 - ◇ This feedback loop keeps volunteers engaged in the process and more likely to re-engage
- **In order to engage with volunteers who have little to no digital access, you can prioritise Volunteer Management System platforms which have a robust facility for SMS integrations**

Effective use of a Volunteer Management System is predicated on an understanding of what goals you need to achieve, for example:

- does our organisation have a high turnover rate of volunteers?
- is there a low quantity of skill-based volunteers?
- do we communicate with our volunteers effectively?
- do we track and monitor our volunteers effectively?



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PROS AND CONS OF OFF-THE-SHELF VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Pros: Designed with the Voluntary Sector in mind. Lots of features for volunteer engagement.

Cons: Can be expensive depending on the number of volunteers to be managed. Learning curves and onboarding can take time. Limited customisation. Can be restrictive for those who aren't digitally literate, have no home internet, etc. and may necessitate use of multiple management systems to enable non-digital volunteers to receive the same information

EXAMPLES OF VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

New Volunteer Management Systems are becoming available all the time, so the following are just a snapshot of some of the ones available. An internet search will identify other options.

The following platforms have a 30-day free trial to see if the platform meets your expectations/goals (click on links for more details).

[Better Impact](#)



[Volgistics](#)



[Volunteero](#)



[Team Kinetic](#)



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ALTERNATIVES TO USING DEDICATED VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Traditional Documentation/Software

Applications such as Microsoft Excel or Microsoft Access can be used to store details of volunteers

Pros: Cheap to use and low barrier to entry.

Cons: Requires lots of internal maintenance to stay up to date and relevant. Requires careful GDPR processes, risk of data duplication and out-of-date files, not as easy to share across the organisation.

Building and Designing your own Volunteer Management System

There are a number of No-Code applications that allow you to build a management system without prior coding experience and there are Cloud services for online collaboration. Examples include:

- Airtable
- Softr
- Stacker

Pros: Cheaper than off-the-shelf Volunteer Management Systems. Highly customisable.

Cons: Poor user interfaces from the outset

OTHER RESOURCES

Check out these guides from Charity Digital:

[A Simple Guide for Managing Charity Volunteers](#)

[A Complete Guide to Volunteer Management](#)

