

## 5 Ways To Drive Volunteers To Say Yes



Association chapter volunteers are the lifeblood of your organization. Without them – on your board, running committees, executing events, etc. – your chapter wouldn't survive. But these days, getting the help association chapters need to run successfully can be more difficult.



With your members pulled in so many different directions, getting the help you need can take some sweat equity. How successful are you? Are you getting enough volunteers? Are you telling potential association chapter volunteers what they need to hear to get them to say yes without hesitating?

If you're trying to get more volunteers for your association chapter by talking about the altruistic value of volunteering, you may want to reconsider your tactic. The "think of all the great things you're doing" might not work so well these days. People are just too busy to say yes to the feel-good aspect of volunteering and forcing association chapter members to volunteer won't get you the results you need.

These days, to give up their limited personal time, most of your members need to get something a little more tangible out of chapter volunteering.

In addition to setting up volunteer opportunities that are interesting to members and fit their availability, you need to be sure the opportunities deliver the benefits they're looking for. You can only do that once you ask your members what they're looking for. But then, once you know what they're looking for, what are the right things to tell them?

Here are five “what’s in it for me” reasons that may resonate better with your members and get them to say yes the next time you ask. Today, talk to your members about how volunteering can provide them with:

- **Connections.** Volunteering at an in-person event, like a speaker series or an advocacy session, gives members an emotional connection they can’t get virtually. Volunteers have a chance to connect with the subject matter expert (SME) in person and ask them questions before or after their presentation. They can have an interaction that’s much more meaningful than asking questions in a chat like everyone else.
- **Networking opportunities.** Millennial and Gen Z association chapter members aren’t fans of traditional “glass of wine in one hand, business card in the other” networking. Volunteering gives these members a way to connect with someone, whether they’re calling to ask an SME if they’ll speak at an event or registering someone at a table for a monthly meeting. First, they talk about the reason for their contact. Then, they’ve established an organic connection that can be used for more meaningful networking.
- **Personal interactions.** Volunteering often requires members to work closely with other members, to set agendas, find locations, solve problems, etc. This gives members a chance for one-on-one interactions with someone they might not connect with otherwise and ask questions that can lead to more intimate connections and experiences.
- **New skills.** Members may not realize that you’re not always looking for volunteers that are experts. Need someone to write your blog posts? Maybe you have a member who would love to work on their content development skills. Need help with your chapter website? Ask for someone who wants to up their technology game. Or maybe you’re looking for someone to help research new technology platforms to manage your association chapter. Tell your volunteers you’re looking for people who want to learn something new and do it outside of the office, where there is often less stress.
- **Access.** Volunteers get access to the experts, because, as volunteers, they’re the ones who have to get to a location early to set up and stay after to make sure everything is taken care of. That extra time gives them a chance to meet the speaker before the event, get to know your board members, and be the person “in the know” that everyone come to for information.

Volunteering is a terrific way for your members to “get ahead” without even knowing they’re doing it. It’s just up to you to give them the reasons they need to hear, so you get the help you need.

