

# How To Keep Volunteering Feeling Good



“Voluntold” -- typically we get a laugh when we mention it. We get the same response when we bring up “voluforced.” But in both cases, it’s typically a nervous laugh and often followed by a groan.



We’ll be surprised if you haven’t heard either of those terms mentioned by your association chapter members when it comes to volunteering for your chapter. Do your members freely volunteer, or more often or do you find it hard to find the volunteers you need, so you resort to finding ways to coerce people into helping?

When your members aren’t volunteering because they want to, things can go bad fast. You may find your members experiencing burnout because they’re working – outside of their day job – more than they have time to, and they may be stressed because they’re not really doing things they want to do or have the time for. When your association chapter volunteering gets to that “dark side,” you may find volunteers stepping down and your chapter losing members at a much faster pace than normal.

Coercion shouldn’t be part of your association chapter volunteer strategy. Volunteering should feel like something your members want to do. But all is not lost. There are there are things you can do, and even say, to make volunteering in your chapter something members want to do, not feel like they must.

## **Volunteering delivers a range of benefits**



In addition to helping your chapter and your members succeed, association chapter volunteering has been shown to deliver mental and physical benefits to the volunteer and those around them. Start to change how your members feel about volunteering by reminding them of the wonderful things volunteering can do for them, like:

- **Provide a sense of belonging.** It's a terrific way for members to connect with their chapter community and build positive relationships of trust, cooperation, and respect.
- **Improve physical health.** Volunteering can lower blood pressure and provide relief from depression and chronic pain.
- **Lead to greater happiness.** People who "give" are often happier than those who don't.
- **Improve the spirits of those around you.** If a person feels good about what they're doing, that feeling spreads to others who, in turn, are more likely to help.
- **Increase your sense of satisfaction.** Volunteers are often more satisfied with their lives because they're interacting with other people, setting, and achieving goals, and learning new things.

### **Give them the tools to make their jobs easier**

Fighting with Excel spreadsheets, remembering how to mail merge, or hunting down passwords shouldn't be something your board members and other association chapter volunteers spend their time doing. What can you do to make the time they spend, when they could be doing something else, easier on everyone?

**Consider microvolunteering.** If members are telling you they don't have time to volunteer, is it possible to split what you're asking them to do into smaller chunks and have several people take it on, instead of just one person? The blog posts you need to have written, uploaded, and linked to on your social channels? Ask one person to complete each piece, instead of having one person manage it all.

**Add an association chapter AMS to your association chapter toolkit.** A chapter association management system (AMS) is a great tool to make chapter association volunteering easier and less stressful, whether you're on the board, heading a committee or running an event. It's the glue that holds everything together.

Looking for passwords? Membership data? Financials? It's all in your AMS. And that central location provides more of a balanced approach to volunteering – as volunteers can more easily and quickly find what they need and collaborate with other volunteers.



Volunteering should be a positive experience for everyone in your chapter. Give members the reasons volunteering is a good thing, and the right tools to do it, and you'll find yourself with happier more engaged members, and time and help to do all those remarkable things you just haven't had the time to get done.

