

## The Committed Volunteer

### Lesson Objective:

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**Lesson Objective:** Recognize the importance of volunteer recruiting, development, and retention in the unit.

### Desired Learning Outcomes:

1. Define “Committed Volunteer”.
2. Understand the volunteer environment in which CAP competes for members.
3. Discuss trends that affect volunteer recruiting and retention.
4. Explain motivational techniques for members.
5. Understand the challenges of developing a committed volunteer.
6. Understand how to provide a graceful exit when appropriate.

### Lesson:

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### Overview:

What if we could match their interests and skills to our missions, to the needs in your unit? What if you could tap into the inner drive that makes people perform while accomplishing the missions of your unit? What if we could discover how to accurately portray what we expect from volunteer/members and what they can expect from us, and then deliver on those promises?

In this segment, we'll discuss volunteering. We'll look over some statistics about who volunteers and how often. This can help you see the overall environment in which we compete for the time and interest of prospective members. We'll examine some trends and gain insight into the overall needs of volunteers. We'll analyze the volunteer development process to see how successful management results in the retention of volunteer members. We'll address the role of resolving conflict as an important component in managing volunteers. Finally, we'll see if, and when, ending volunteer commitment is appropriate.

## CAP Unit Commanders Course: Student Guide

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From prospect to player, producer to partner, we can assist in developing the commitment of volunteers to your unit.

This lesson will explore the various components of the development process, but understanding each one will require more study. Various links to internet information and other resources are provided to guide your exploration. Your time will be well invested in better understanding the factors involved in a successful volunteer development process.

### “Committed Volunteer” Defined:

A committed volunteer is a priceless resource. A truly committed volunteer is a reliable and loyal person of virtue, one who has a personal character trait to see something through to its finish, because they believe in the cause and that the team is depending on them. In the workplace, employees perform best when challenged with a goal that inspires teamwork; that is also true in volunteer organizations, such as the Civil Air Patrol.

Committed volunteers are the pillars upon which every successful volunteer organization stands.

### The Volunteer Environment:

Volunteers respond to many needs in our communities, our religious institutions and schools, as well as supporting sports for children and youth. Volunteers raise funds to support many worthy causes, feed the hungry and care for the needy especially during disasters.

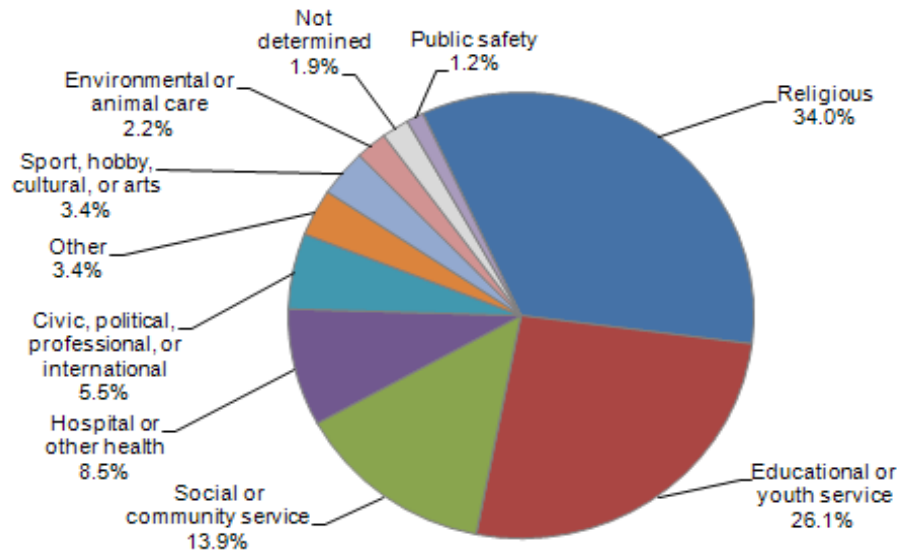
Volunteering is also the very foundation of Civil Air Patrol founded simply to allow pilots and others, like radio operators, to volunteer their skills and services to provide security for our nation. This is a proud tradition we carry on today.

## Who Volunteers?

About 63.4 million people volunteered at least once during the year 2009. While those numbers may seem large, this amounts to only **26.8% of the population** (Bureau of Labor). The median was 50 hours annually. Compare that to the two hour weekly minimum we expect of all members just for unit meetings.

More statistics give us a clearer picture of the most common types of volunteering. Remember we are using these to help us better understand the process of acquiring and maintaining our own volunteer members.

**Volunteers by type of main organization for which volunteer activities were performed, September 2009**



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

By type of volunteering:

- 34.0 religious, most frequent
- 26.1 educational or youth service related
- 13.9 social or community service organizations

Note: This data were collected through a supplement to the September 2009 Current Population Survey (CPS).

Websites like [VolunteeringinAmerica.gov](http://VolunteeringinAmerica.gov) or <http://national.servicerresources.org> offer many additional statistics regarding the demographics of volunteering and support materials.

Civil Air Patrol can be considered similar to several of those categories listed (Educational or youth services, Community service, civic and/or Public Safety), but the fact remains that many other organizations compete for this pool of volunteers. Many of the references in this lesson capitalize on the volunteer and non-profit community in which we operate.

In today's busy society, it is often a challenge for people to think about finding time to volunteer. However, the benefits of volunteering are enormous for the volunteer, their family and for the community. The right match can help them find friends, reach out to the community, learn new skills and even advance their career. Volunteering can even help protect their mental and physical health. Volunteers often seek out non-profit organizations; many prefer that their efforts go to the community as opposed to generating profits for a company whose goal is to obtain financial gains. The Civil Air Patrol is a non-profit organization and this is often one of the primary reasons a volunteer will seek out CAP and stay. Volunteers often feel a sense of pride, self-worth, and accomplishment by donating their time and efforts to bettering the community, saving lives, providing comfort and shelter to disaster victims, and providing assistance to humanitarian efforts. These are all strong points of the Civil Air Patrol.

We must also consider how to identify and attract those who are most likely to "fit" and succeed in CAP if we are to maximize our efforts.

### Why they volunteer:

- to feel needed
- to share a skill
- to get to know a community
- to demonstrate commitment to a cause/belief
- to gain leadership skills
- to act out a fantasy
- to do your civic duty
- because of a friend or relative
- satisfaction from accomplishment
- to keep busy
- for recognition
- to repay a debt
- to donate professional skills
- because there is no one else to do it
- to have an impact
- to learn something new
- for freedom of schedule
- to help a friend or relative
- for escape
- to be challenged
- to feel proud
- to make new friends
- to explore a career
- to help someone
- as therapy
- to do something different from your job
- for fun!
- to earn academic credit
- to keep skills alive
- because an agency is geographically close
- to have an excuse to do what you love
- to assure progress
- to feel good
- to be part of a team
- to gain status
- because you were asked
- to test yourself
- to build your resume
- to be an agent of change

### **The Benefits of Volunteering:**

Volunteering also provides benefits to the volunteer in the following ways:

- Adds to their professional experience and skill set
- Presents challenges and opportunities to grow
- Establishes new contacts and connections in the community

Create a list with as many other benefits you can discover in order to be prepared for those prospects when they arrive at your unit.

### **Current Trends Affecting Volunteer Recruiting and Retention:**

As society and values change, volunteer organizations must identify these changes and adapt to ensure survivability. There are seven major trends that have been identified which currently affect volunteer recruitment and organizational recognition:

#### **Seven Major Trends Affecting Volunteer Recruitment and Recognition:**

1. Changing social structure, more single parent, blended and alternative families
2. Changing work patterns, many work non standard hours
3. Changing business relationships, performance, profits, and social conscience
4. Changing lifestyles of Baby Boomers, a formidable demographic
5. Changing litigious concerns, potential lawsuits affect volunteering
6. Changing technology, internet, social networking, etc.
7. Changing concept of time, technology has made many feel "time poor"

(Ref: article at [morevolunteers.com](http://morevolunteers.com), in Issue 3 of their newsletter, these are the top seven of over 100 identified).

These issues only begin to outline the environment in which Civil Air Patrol competes today for the interest and time of potential volunteers. We must plan around these factors and their impact on our membership.

### Motivational Techniques for Members:

- A. **Ensure their physiological needs are met.** Volunteers must be placed and operate in situations that are sustainable. This means that they must be afforded the basic physical requirement to be successful: water, heat, shelter, protective clothing, etc. As a commander, you must take care of these basic needs or you'll lose volunteers fast.
- B. **Create and sustain a feeling of self-confidence among members.** Empowering members and making them feel their contributions are vital to the success of the unit is an important component of motivating them. When they feel that, acting independently or as a team, they are achieving the group's goals, they will push themselves to go farther, and they will feel like they are really part of something special.
- C. **Provide adequate guidance.** Tell them what you want. If necessary, tell them how you want it done. Do not set them up for failure by having them guess about your intentions. If you fail to give them the instructions (tools) they need to accomplish the task you set for them, and are upset that they didn't complete the task, then the blame is yours, not theirs. When you give them adequate guidance, and they accomplish the task to your satisfaction, you will make them feel more self confident (item b), and you will have more confidence in them as well.
- D. **Recognize the uniqueness of individual members.** Some people are better with cadets than others. Some are better at writing, teaching, flying, or leading. Some members are not comfortable flying but feel more comfortable leading a ground team. The point here is that your members have unique talents and abilities – all of which can be used to accomplish the mission. Mix and match the tasks with the members and don't force members to do something they haven't got the aptitude for **unless** you absolutely have to.

Note here that this item is based on aptitude, not desire; this shouldn't be used as an excuse by members to get out of certain activities which they feel are distasteful. It should be used however, as a way to make members feel the talents they do have are recognized and contribute to the squadron's success.

- E. **Accentuate the positive.** Don't assume that just because you are happy with the way things are going that your members will know it. A frequent complaint in management surveys is that management (commanders) is seldom heard from unless there's trouble. You know that you are supposed to correct your members when things go wrong. But you should also let your people know when things go right, and show them how they were the ones who made the right things happen.

When things do go wrong; find something positive to say before you give constructive criticism. This may sound touchy-feely, but it's really a practical step. People will be more open to what you have to say when you aren't threatening. Say something like: "I liked the way that you spoke to the parents at the open house. Next time though, I'd appreciate it if you would introduce them to the Cadet Commander; she will be one of the people the new cadets will be dealing with." It is a little easier to take than: "Why didn't you introduce the parents to the Cadet Commander? You know that I want them to meet her." Which would you rather hear?

- F. **Practice participative management.** Give your people the ability to "buy in" to the squadron's programs. For instance, hold planning meetings with the staff, let them in on your vision, and give them the chance to contribute to the vision. We understand that there may be some instances when participative management is not practical, such as in the airplane or during a mission. Don't be afraid to assert your authority when you need to, but when you do assert yourself be sure that you have to. The dictatorial style of leadership should be used sparingly and goes stale quickly.

- G. **Listen.** Sounds simple doesn't it? Effective listening is not simple, but it can be easier with practice. How do you feel when someone you're talking to finishes your sentence for you? What happens when you are talking and you are interrupted? When you listen, you do more than merely hear sound. You evaluate the speaker's point of view. Your mind is clear and you haven't already made judgments about what the speaker is about to say. You take the time to hear them out, and you respect what they have to say. Actually, listening is more a gauge of respect than it is a leadership tool.

How do you know when you are listening? You are listening if you are hearing every word of the speaker's sentence. You are listening if the speaker finds you understand what they mean. You are not listening if you think you know what the speaker will say before they say it. You are not listening if you interrupt or try to finish their thought for them. You are not listening if you anticipate their response to your thoughts. Listening is not a chess match.

- H. **Be loyal to your members.** The only way to receive loyalty is to give loyalty. Support your members whenever you can and, whatever you do, don't sell them out. One of the biggest mistakes commanders can make is to take the credit for the good work their subordinates do while blaming them for mistakes. Part of being loyal is ensuring that members receive the credit due them.

Another part of being loyal to your members is backing them up once you have empowered them with the authority to make decisions. You need to use judgment here, but try to support them even if they made a wrong choice if the decision will not jeopardize the safety or accomplishment of the mission. If you must override the decision, do it with respect. In short, let them make minor mistakes and turn the missteps into learning opportunities for your members.

- I. **Respect your members.** Treat your members as you want to be treated. Though they are bound by regulation to do certain things and must obey your lawful orders; remember that because they are volunteers, they have other obligations. Their career and family will come first in their lives and rightly so. Respect your members' abilities and their experience in whatever area they specialize in. Respect their desire to do the right thing. When you respect them, they will try harder for you.
- J. **Recognize their achievements in meeting your objectives (say "thank you").** Perhaps the simplest and most gratifying way to motivate your members is to recognize their good works and say thank you. You have many tools to accomplish this. CAP provides certificates of accomplishment and achievement for you to hand out to deserving members. You can recommend people for Commander's Commendations and other decorations for outstanding performance and achievement. You can stay on top of their training and time in grade and get them promoted at the earliest possible date.

But two words, "thank you" represent the simplest form of all of these. Thank them for their day to day contributions. Thank them when you call them out before dawn to find a missing aircraft – even when you don't find it. Thank them after a work party when the building looks clean. Get it? Thanking them for the little things mean a lot.

### Motivational Techniques for Members

- Ensure their physiological needs are met
- Create & sustain their self-confidence
- Provide adequate guidance
- Recognize each member's uniqueness
- Accentuate the positive
- Practice participative management
- Listen to what they have to say
- Be loyal to your members
- Respect your members
- Recognize their achievements
- Say "Thank you"

To summarize, motivating your members can take a lot of the work out of getting the job done. When you motivate your people, they want to do the job, and they want to do it right the first time. When you recognize that people are motivated first by physiological needs and then by psychological ones, you have the key to determining what will motivate your members at any point in time. Maslow's hierarchy makes determining their needs simple. By following some of these simple hints you can build a desire within your squadron to work together and accomplish the squadron's objectives.

## The Challenges of Developing a Committed Volunteer:

These challenges include: creating a welcoming atmosphere, providing guidance & expectations, matching members with the right job, and using the right motivation techniques that work for them individually.

### **Create a Welcoming Atmosphere:**

Success **begins with a welcoming atmosphere** for the **prospect**. It should be clear that the contribution of the volunteer will be valued. Introductions and social courtesies are important. Many different sources indicate volunteers must:

- be appreciated
- enjoy a sense of belonging
- develop or feel capable at their tasks
- make a difference with their time
- be included in decision making
- have an opportunity for personal growth
- receive recognition.

If these seem familiar, it's because they are the fulfillment of many of those motivators discussed previously.

### **Provide Guidance & Expectations:**

The volunteer orientation should be clearly designed to provide guidance and expectations to both new and veteran members with information about the organization, your unit, and what to expect that will allow them to become a contributor at your unit. In addition, they need to know their responsibilities and obligations:

- What to do
- How to do it
- Time required
- When you need it
- Tools to get it done
- Who helps them
- How they help and
- Why it matters

Note: It is very important to **only promise what can be delivered and deliver what is promised**. This approach also puts into practice our CAP Core values of Integrity and Respect. This practice will also avoid misunderstandings and conflict later.

### **Matching the right volunteer to the right job:**

Matching a volunteer with the right job is important to long term success. Research supports this concept, and we know it from our own experience. Take the time to find out what the new member really wants and match it with your needs if possible. Resist the temptation to force new members into positions you need filled, disregarding their qualifications or desires.

### **Matching the right type of motivation to the type of person:**

Matching the type of motivation to the type of person will get duties done faster and more effectively. Several motivational types have been identified:

- Achiever: wants results, and hates idle time
- Affiliator: meets & greets, conversationalist, and is uncomfortable with silence
- Influencer: thrives on power, takes charge, and wants to have an impact

These motivational types seem consistent with several personality styles. They parallel personality traits that can be found in almost every organization and should be exploited to enhance your unit.

Retention starts here with good management practices. Retention is really an outcome. The Institute for Volunteering research indicates the task for volunteer management is finding the right blend: combining choice and control, flexibility and organization, informality and efficiency, personal and professional support. One model will not be likely to fit all. Our commitment to the needs of each volunteer will be likely to be reflected by their commitment to Civil Air Patrol and to becoming a producer on our team.

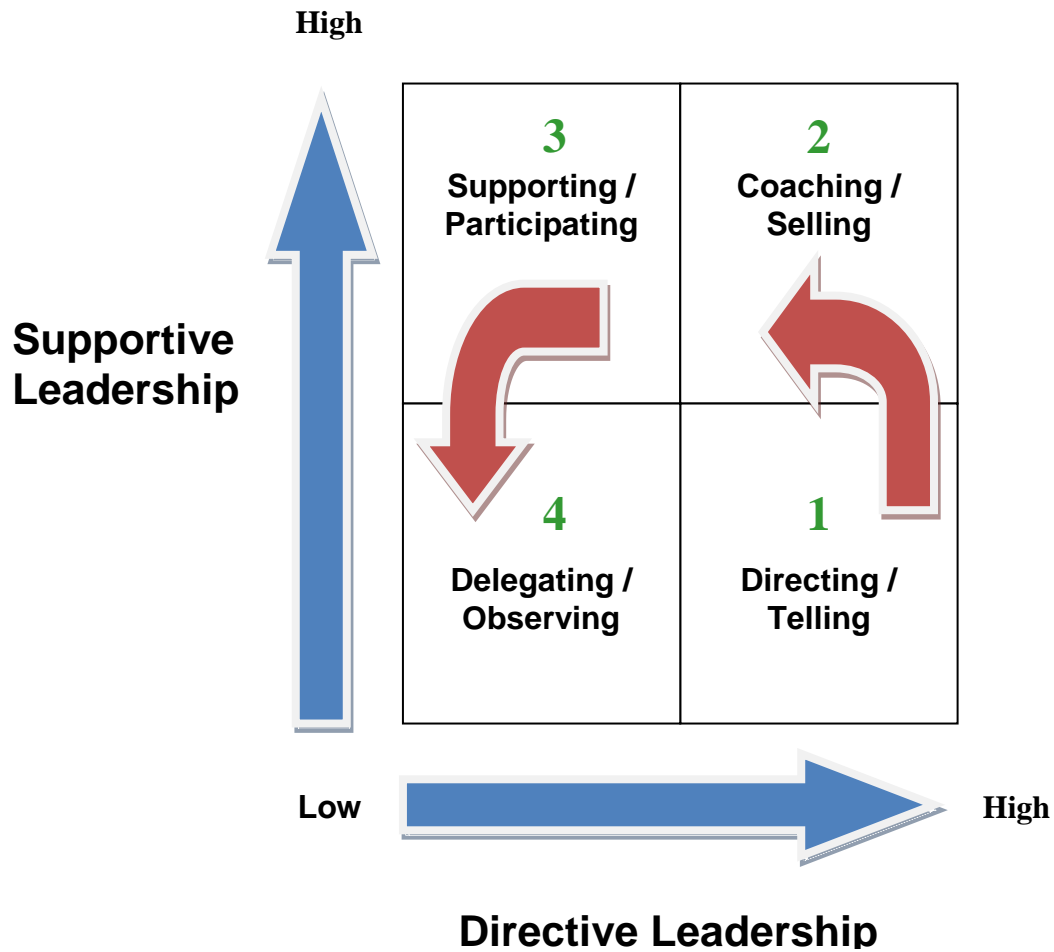
Ongoing training, as well as the opportunity to apply what has been learned are crucial to the transition from “Player” to “Producer”, a valuable contributor to your unit.

This development process aligns with the concepts of Situational Leadership, matching supervision to the level of competence and commitment of the developing member.

### **Hersey and Blanchard’s Model for Situational Leadership**

Hersey and Blanchard determined that consistently effective leadership is situational in nature. When using the Hersey and Blanchard’s Situational Leadership Model, a leader will apply the appropriate leadership style to use based on the level of follower that is being led, hence it is situational.

Hersey and Blanchard's Model for Situational Leadership:



Follower 1: Low competence, low commitment / Unable and unwilling or insecure  
**Leadership Style to Use 1**: High task focus, low relationship focus

Follower 2: Some competence, variable commitment / Unable but willing  
**Leadership Style to Use 2**: High task focus, high relationship focus

Follower 3: High competence, variable commitment / Able but unwilling or insecure  
**Leadership Style to Use 3**: Low task focus, high relationship focus

Follower 4: High competence, high commitment / Able and willing or motivated  
**Leadership Style to Use 4**: Low task focus, low relationship focus

Reference: Paul Hersey and Kenneth H. Blanchard, *Management of Organizational Behavior: Utilizing Human Resources*, 3d Edition (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1977).

### **Delegation:**

Appropriate delegation of meaningful tasks builds these producers into partners and professionals, committed volunteers. The process of delegation is far too large a subject to cover in this lesson, but its importance cannot be overemphasized. Delegating gradually and appropriately to the skill, knowledge and motivational level of each member will enable your team to establish and maintain the standards of a quality CAP unit.

### **How to Provide a Graceful Exit when Appropriate:**

- A. When is it appropriate for a member to leave?
1. Life changes- job relocation, family commitments, acute or long-term health issues
  2. Organizational issues that cannot be resolved
    - a. Compliance with regulations
    - b. Ongoing behaviors (personal or personality issues) that detrimentally affect the functioning of the unit

All of us are devalued when the undesirable behavior or performance of another person, even a well-meaning volunteer, is allowed to continue unchecked and unaddressed. For the good of the program and the morale of all of the workers, problems must be addressed.

- B. How do we provide a graceful exit?
- With dignity
  - With documentation
  - With acknowledgement of the contributions made and the impact of the loss

Adverse member actions will address specifics for compliance with CAP regulations and policies. Some fundamental principles apply in almost any situation. Honor the needs of the mission and the members of the team to the extent possible while addressing the situation. Even termination actions should not be personal on the part of our leadership. Our responsibilities and the standards of our organization are paramount to the ongoing success of our missions. As commanders, we bear the weight of leading our members even in the most difficult situations.

**Our volunteer members are valued resources and must be treated as such from beginning to end of their time with the Civil Air Patrol!**