Managing sports event Volunteers: London 2012 Olympic Games Makers

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Introduction

Effective volunteer recruitment
Understanding motivation
Managing expectations
London 2012

“It is important to understand their motivations and expectations as a foundation to developing appropriate recruitment, retention and continuance policies”.

Ralston et al. (2005: 509)
Background of Study

229 questionnaires and 7 in-depth, semi-structured interviews
Test Event volunteers – April to June 2012
Local focus
Altruism, work experience, gaining new skills, social reasons and Olympic-related motives were explored
Low et al.’s (2007) study on charity volunteers, altruistic reasons
Volunteers at sporting events and festivals tend to have more career-focused or social motivations (Barron and Rihova, 2011; Pauline and Pauline, 2009; Downward et al., 2005).
Findings

The average Test Event volunteer is male, between the ages of 51-64, has a graduate degree, is employed full-time and lives in South-East England. He has previously volunteered but never at a sports event and will volunteer at the Olympic Games in the summer of 2012.

- 75.11% have volunteered in the past
- 42.36% have volunteered at a sports event
- They feel a sense of achievement when they volunteer
- They do not expect some type of recognition
Findings

Motivation

Volunteering for altruistic reasons; minimal
Males: involved in sport
Females: national pride
18-24 age bracket: gain new skills and experience, and improve chances of employment
Quantitative findings supported by interviews

“To be a doctor at the Olympics was probably the best thing I could have put on my CV” (V5, 25 year-old female)
Findings

Volunteering and career

Most important for 18-24 year olds, as well as students
75.41% of all respondents believe that the Games Maker experience will improve their employability

“If you’ve had 25 years of work experience, why would you feel that you need to volunteer to get more work?” (V4, 50-64 year-old male)

Not one respondent disagreed with the statement ‘volunteering strengthens one’s CV’, although 9.61% were unsure

96.07% of respondents see volunteering as a beneficial way to gain new skills
Findings

Expectations

Qualitative research was beneficial in this area as expectations could be defined by the volunteers. According to Poole and Van de Ven (2004), if expectations are fulfilled, both employer & employee will ‘produce productive behaviour’, however if they are not, then employees become demotivated and disenchanted. Attrition rates were noted amongst 4 of the 7 respondents. “The role given - I felt was very menial . . . . and at that stage I was seriously thinking of pulling out” (V2, 2012: 94).
In Practice

Understanding motivation, managing expectations and providing an enjoyable volunteer experience will result in a lower attrition rate.

Create suitable roles and training, catering to demographics:
- Skills development/training for younger volunteers and/or students
- Challenging/interesting roles for 35-50 year olds (supervisory)
- Social roles for those nearing or in retirement

Applying it to London’s Athletes Village

Database?? Legacy??

"Volunteers are a core component of sport service delivery and an important element of the Olympic Games Culture."

(Giannoulakis et al., 2008: 191)


Poole, M. S. and Van de Ven, A. H. (eds) (2004) Handbook of Organizational Change and
Thank you