

CONSUMER SATISFACTION AND THE MARKETING OF VOLUNTARISM: THE CASE OF APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN HOUSING

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ABSTRACT

Using ethnographic methodologies, this study examines Appalachian Mountain Housing, a volunteer agency that builds inexpensive houses for low income consumers, to gain insights into volunteer recruitment and retention. The volunteers in this study experienced a great deal of personal satisfaction as they participated in building homes for others. But like commercial organizations, charities must take care to fulfill expectations they raise in their promotional materials and recruitment meetings. As in business, so in philanthropy, over promising can increase dissatisfaction and reduce long-term commitment to the organization. One key step in fulfilling expectations is an accurate analysis of the various functions the organization must perform and a corresponding division of labor. Fund raising, in particular, may require special aptitudes and a special set of initial expectations in the volunteers who will be expected to carry out this activity. Since they rely entirely on volunteer labor, charitable organizations must also make a concerted effort to target and recruit volunteers who can successfully manage the various functions that must be performed in the organization. The satisfaction of the mass of volunteers will frequently depend on the skill with which the organization's leadership orchestrates the various charitable activities.

INTRODUCTION

Voluntarism is on the decline in America (New York Times 1994). There are several possible explanations for this phenomenon, including less free time, less favorable attitudes toward voluntarism, inappropriate recruitment, and lack of necessary motivation and skills for successful volunteer work (Clary et al. 1994; Clary and Orenstein 1991; Ferre 1993; Fischer, Mueller, and Cooper 1991; Hammonds and Jones

1994; Vaillancourt 1994). Since people are less inclined to volunteer, agencies that depend on unpaid labor increasingly find it necessary to accurately target, then aggressively market to groups likely to support volunteer causes (Clary et al. 1994; Bagozzi and Moore 1994). And the need for aggressive recruitment may increase if Republicans successfully devolve social responsibility from government to private charitable agencies that are part of civil society (Gingrich et al. 1994).

While recruitment is often difficult, if properly orchestrated, voluntarism can be a very satisfying experience (Tobias 1991). Consequently, well managed volunteer organizations have relatively high retention rates (Stevens 1991). Key steps in improving management and increasing the recruitment and retention of volunteers include the identification of aspects of voluntarism that tend to make it more satisfying, the aggressive promotion of these positive aspects of the work among receptive target populations, and the organization of the volunteer experience to fulfill the promise of participant satisfaction. This paper focuses on developing an in-depth understanding of satisfaction and dissatisfaction among volunteers and organization leaders by analyzing one private charitable organization, Appalachian Mountain Housing.

APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN HOUSING

Appalachian Mountain Housing (AMH, hereafter) is a volunteer agency devoted to providing adequate shelter to people living in substandard housing. AMH selects low-income beneficiaries who can demonstrate both financial need and an ability to meet minimal mortgage payments. The agency's unpaid volunteers solicit funds to cover the cost of materials and participate in the construction of inexpensive homes. Both activities--fund raising and home building--are essential to the success of the organization. Since

there is no shortage of qualified beneficiaries, the principal constraint on the activities of AMH is a shortage of volunteers and of the funds they raise. Given this constraint, the organization's most important managerial challenge is recruiting volunteers and ensuring that they have a positive experience with AMH. AMH is not selective in its recruitment, the only requirement for participation being, in the words of one leader, to "know the business end of a hammer."

METHODOLOGY

Since the goal of this research was a deep understanding of volunteer satisfaction/dissatisfaction, an interpretive methodology was employed (Hudson and Ozanne 1988). Specifically, participant observation (Arnould and Wallendorf 1994; Belk 1991; Hammersley and Atkinson 1983; Hirschman 1986) and a hermeneutical analysis of photographs as well as documents and videos obtained from AMH (Hirschman 1990) were used to collect and analyze the data. All of this ethnographic research was conducted with the knowledge and permission of the local AMH chapter president.

Participant Observation

Participant observation is an intense form of research, for researchers immerse themselves in the experience they are studying (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983). In part because the emphasis is on gaining a relatively complete experience of the phenomenon rather than on the strict experimental control sought by positivists, data developed in this type of study tend to be very rich and detailed. Indeed, because participant observers are critically aware of what they and others are experiencing, they often provide insights into cultural phenomena that other, less critical participants cannot provide (Arnould and Wallendorf 1994; O'Guinn and Belk 1989).

In this study, participant observation consisted of serving as a volunteer in an AMH chapter. The first researcher participated by attending organizational meetings, fund raising activities, and home building sessions from August 28, 1992 to June 19, 1993. While involved in or immediately following each of these activities, he

took detailed notes on what happened and what leaders and other volunteers said (see exhibits 1 and 2 for examples of these notes). In conjunction with his participant observation, he took photographs chronicling the building of the two homes he helped construct.

Organizational meetings were held every other Tuesday evening and usually lasted about an hour. Attendance was required of anyone wishing to help on "work days," which were held most Saturdays. The meetings tended to focus on fund raising, the less enjoyable but, nevertheless, indispensable portion of the volunteers' work. Funds were solicited directly from the volunteers, sometimes through the sale of AMH paraphernalia, and outside fund raisers were proposed and organized. During these bi-weekly meetings, the researcher sat in the back of the room and took detailed, minute by minute, notes on the progression of the meeting, trying as much as possible to capture the full meeting experience (see Exhibit 1; Hammersley and Atkinson 1983; Latour and Woolgar 1979). His focus on note taking meant he was able to participate in the meeting only passively. At the end of the session, he formulated an overall impression of the meeting and recorded it in his field notes.

Saturday work days lasted from four to ten hours, depending on the project undertaken that day. While involved in the construction work, it was not possible to make written notes. However, the researcher did make mental notes of what was going on each hour so that he could more easily reconstruct what had happened. And immediately following the work session, he sat down at home and wrote about the events of the day (see Exhibit 2). He also brought his camera, on several occasions, and took photographs of the homes as the construction progressed.

During the Saturday work days, the researcher had long conversations with many of the other volunteers as he worked with them. Detailed reports of these conversations are included in the field note data. The researcher made a special effort to work side-by-side with H, the volunteer who would be the future occupant of the home.

To get a broader perspective on volunteer participation, the researcher also offered to help with home construction during the week when the only people on site were the contractors, including

Exhibit 1**Example of Notes Taken During Weekly Meetings of Appalachian Mountain Housing**

Below is a 6 minute excerpt of the notes taken at the orientation meeting for this chapter of Appalachian Mountain Housing on September 8, 1992.

- 6:56 p.m.** I arrived, sat down, got a flier, and started writing. The meeting is being held in [building name, room number] the student union building. Starting time for the meeting is 7:00 p.m.
- 6:57.** There are twenty-five people so far in the room. Two more just walked in. The people in here look young, like mostly undergraduate types.
- 6:58.** Two more guys come in. The room is beginning to fill up. There are two women (ages I would guess to be about 20) at the front of the room around a table filled with fliers and handouts. It is my guess that they are organizing the meeting. One of the two is wearing an Appalachian Mountain Housing T-shirt.
- 6:59.** An older man (he looks over 30) with glasses and a mustache walked in carrying some more flyers, which he sets on the table. He is talking to the two women who look like they are in charge.
- 7:00.** More people keep coming into the room. There are now 36 people in the room.
- 7:00.46.** The brunette with the glasses who is wearing the Appalachian Mountain Housing T-shirt says, "Let's get started," and she opens the meeting. Others are still wandering in.
- 7:01.** The brunette introduces herself as J, President of the [local] chapter of Appalachian Mountain Housing. She asks if anyone knows about the program. Several people raise their hands.
- 7:02.** J starts giving a brief overview of Appalachian Mountain Housing and [this] chapter of the organization. The chapter has built 8 homes. They are currently finishing one in [name of city] and starting another in [name of city]. She says they get professionals to do the electrical and plumbing work, and that no other experience is necessary to help build these homes.

the skilled retired home builders who organized and managed the work of the average volunteer and professionals hired to do the electrical and plumbing work. He also attended the regular fund raisers and some special gatherings such as home

Exhibit 2**Example of Notes Written After Work Days**

B also talked about the AMH volunteers. He appreciated their help, but he was just a little concerned about their sloppiness. For example, where the hood and light over the stove were supposed to go, the volunteers hadn't cut out a space for the electrical feed. He said he would have to cut into the wall and try to find the wire, which he said he was sure was there. He also commented on the somewhat sloppy paint job, and indicated he and JW would have to go around and fix the problems. But he didn't seem upset, rather resigned to the fact that these things happen when you have non-professional volunteers building the homes.

JW mentioned very briefly that he has been involved with Appalachian Mountain Housing since its inception in the [area], and that his wife used to help him build a lot when he first retired, but that she has recently decided not to help as much. He said she now sometimes gets aggravated when she sees him spending too much time on the projects.

Another thing I discovered today is that JW and B take great pride on their wheeling and dealing skills. They know every home supply center in the area, and they shop them all, often times spending an entire morning looking for a single item at the best price. For example, B told me they bought the cabinets and base units from [one store], since they offered the best price, and the counter top from [another store], since they charged the least amount for the mitered cut. He bought the sink from [a third store] because they were on sale for \$24.95, nearly half off. Indeed, the reason the work day started at noon today instead of 9:30 was because JW and B were out buying the things we needed for today's job. He already had the plumber's putty and screws, as well as the tools, for the job, which he freely donated. He joked with JW that AMH now owed him two containers of plumber's putty, and when JW offered to replace them, B graciously refused. I got the distinct impression that building these homes was a labor of love for both men, that they took their jobs seriously, and were very proud of how much money they were able to save. JW mentioned to me that on the previous home, they had finished it several hundred dollars under budget, even after allowing for the purchase of a heat pump not in the original plans. And all because of the hard bargains they drove, the discounts they obtained, and the sales they shopped. B also said that despite the volunteer nature of the help, that these homes were better built than the ones he helped [a competing, for-profit organization] build.

dedications and administrative meetings of the AMH executive committee.

Hermeneutical Analysis

The data for the study were interpretively and iteratively analyzed using the methods of Arnould and Wallendorf (1994), McCracken (1988), and Spradley (1979). The first step was to textualize all of the data by describing the photographs and writing field notes on the interview and observational experiences. These texts and documents obtained from AMH were then analyzed in an iterative process involving multiple readings of these texts. The process was dialectical, for instead of the fixed categories used in traditional content analysis (Kassarjian 1977), evolving categories were used, categories which expanded as the data were repeatedly examined. Several iterations were required to adequately challenge and expand the evolving themes and to extract from them a coherent interpretation.

MAJOR FINDINGS

The most striking finding to emerge from this study was the very different levels of success that AMH had in creating volunteer satisfaction while carrying out its two primary tasks--raising funds and building houses. The organization skillfully produced considerable satisfaction in its home building activities, but volunteers were generally dissatisfied with fund raising efforts, and that dissatisfaction was a drag on the entire organization. In the discussion below, these two aspects of AMH's work are discussed separately. Though it follows fund raising temporally and logically, home building is discussed first, for this successful activity illustrates some of the things AMH could do to be more successful in producing volunteer satisfaction with its fund raising efforts.

Home Building at AMH

In their home building work, AMH's volunteer leaders understood very well the importance both of purely altruistic satisfactions and of more personal, individualistic rewards. In prospecting for new recruits and sometimes at the beginning of the bi-weekly meetings, they used professionally produced printed and audio-visual materials that emphasized the good volunteers did for people who live in substandard housing. These materials

showed or told about grateful families who escaped poverty and homelessness by moving into homes built for them by Appalachian Mountain Housing. The moving stories often left both new recruits and veteran volunteers teary-eyed, the new recruits now eager to sign up with AMH, and existing volunteers eager to get to work on homes already underway, for the stories dramatized just how much AMH contributed to the life satisfaction of the home recipients.

But while the altruistic urge to help the economically disadvantaged generally seemed to be the initial motive for signing on with AMH and could rekindle the enthusiasm of veteran volunteers, the leaders of AMH did not rely on that motive to sustain involvement with the organization, perhaps because the emotional appeal of the well made promotional materials raised expectations that often couldn't be fulfilled in the context of the local chapter. Not every beneficiary is as worthy or grateful as those featured in promotional materials. And in any case, beneficiaries, who also attend organizational meetings and participate on work days, might feel degraded if their dependency and appreciation were constantly emphasized. So in the bi-weekly meetings, leaders spoke very little of the benefits the new home owner would receive. They focused, rather, on direct benefits to the volunteers: the good feelings they would have, the sense of accomplishment, the friends they would make, the parties that would be thrown for them, and even sightseeing they could do if they got involved in certain special projects.

The topics emphasized by the local leaders at the meetings made it clear that, in practice, they regarded the relatively scarce volunteers, not the relatively abundant beneficiaries, as their primary constituency, their primary customer. In the nine months during which the researcher attended bi-weekly meetings, helping out the less fortunate was mentioned (outside the professionally prepared promotional materials and formal presentations) only four times. When they weren't talking about fund raising, local leaders focused on personal rewards the volunteers would receive. The most common theme was how good the work would make volunteers feel, which was stressed in virtually every meeting. In the initial recruitment meeting, the chapter president said recruits should

join AMH because building houses "really makes you feel good." Other chapter leaders also talked about how good volunteers would feel, about the pride they would feel, after a hard day of building houses. This emphasis on good feeling is reflected in field notes made during one of the first meetings:

Tonight in the meeting, more emphasis was place again on feeling good than on helping people get homes. SD . . . focused on how good it made him and the volunteers feel. . . . The feel goodism was especially apparent here tonight. He stressed making friends . . . and I think he scored points with the [people] in the room. . . . I do feel good after I build the homes, and this seems to be good marketing, making people feel good.

As the notes indicate, the leaders' promise that people would feel good was fulfilled. Working hard building houses was rewarding, and it did make people feel good, as the chapter leaders said it would. There was a definite sense of pride as the houses took shape and were finished, and many of the volunteers commented on how good they felt. They were especially likely to express feelings of satisfaction at the end of the work day, when they set aside the tools and reflected on what they had accomplished. Some talked of being at peace, others of feeling sore but good, and still others said they could not wait until the next work day to do it all over again. Many expressed deep satisfaction with the progress the house was making as it literally went from a hole in the ground to a finished structure. But the repeated and common theme was how good it felt to actually participate in the construction of the house.

The good feeling was such an important benefit that it was sometimes treated as a scarce resource, as the following incident recorded in the field notes for the first work day indicates:

I was working really hard pounding nails into the deck, and someone told me to slow down and give someone else a chance to help. I thought I would work my hardest while I was there, but apparently it was more important for people to feel good about what they were

doing than to get the job done.

The rhetoric of the bi-weekly meetings that focused on feeling good raised expectations that generally seemed to be fulfilled: feeling good about themselves and what they had accomplished was an actual, realized benefit for the volunteer laborers and represented a major source of their satisfaction with the volunteer effort.

Other aspects of work days emphasized by leaders in the bi-weekly meetings were having fun, partying, meeting new friends, and sightseeing. All of these promises were fulfilled in one degree or another. After one of the work days, the researcher wrote in his field notes:

The contractor had marked all the places we needed to put the joists, and so, once again, we did all the hammering. It was quite fun, actually, and we were able to get about a fourth of the joists completed.

On days when work extended past noon, the local AMH chapter bought pizza for everyone, which created a festive, party-like mood. The promise of pizza parties was frequently mentioned at the bi-weekly meetings to entice volunteers to participate on work days.

In two meetings, AMH leaders presented opportunities to combine home construction with sightseeing. Hurricane Andrew hit Dade County, Florida, during the study, and an appeal was made for volunteers to go to Florida during Thanksgiving to help out with the rebuilding effort. This event was framed as an opportunity to travel, have fun, meet new people, and, while in Florida, to beat a few nails into houses. In another meeting, volunteers from Peace Works, a like-minded organization that builds low-cost housing abroad, made a presentation on opportunities available for international travel.

[The Peace Works spokesperson] says that Peace Works is a great way to make friends. . . . [The presentation] is on his recent trip with Peace Works to Mexico; he mentions the price for the tour: about \$1,200; stresses that it is a great tourist opportunity; suggests that they go to Mexico to be a tourist but help out nonetheless while they are there.

That the AMH leaders viewed the volunteers as their primary constituency became apparent on one occasion when the interests of the volunteers and those of the beneficiary came into conflict. The incident was recorded as follows in the field notes:

H [the beneficiary] had noticed that someone had written "f--k you" on the inside of the foundation, and she was incensed. She said if someone was going to vandalize her house, she didn't want that person volunteering to help. I mentioned that we would be covering the inside of the foundation with Thoro-Seal next week, and it would cover the graffiti up. She realized this, but was still very angry. She said that this was her house, and that she had put too much energy and effort into building it for some punk to come along and deface it, even if the graffiti would be covered up eventually. She said if she found out who did it, she would ask that person to not come back anymore. She said that the only person who had a right to do that type of stuff to her house was her, and that she wouldn't do it. She said it offended her religious morals, and pointed it out to J [the chapter president] who was totally insensitive to H's feelings. J brushed it aside as a joke, and said it would be covered over.

Though this incident was important to H, J ignored her concerns as unimportant. She felt that some joking around was necessary if work days were to be fun for the volunteers, and she did not want to alienate volunteers by taking a stand against this behavior. AMH depends upon the volunteers to sustain it with their time and money. It cannot afford to alienate them. So AMH leaders make a strong effort to keep volunteers satisfied with the work they do.

Participation in AMH work days required from volunteers a sacrifice of both time and comfort. But AMH leaders sought to minimize these costs by rearranging work schedules and by framing as pleasurable pain the soreness that almost always afflicted volunteers unaccustomed to hard, physical labor. During organizational meetings, they acknowledged that work days would generally mean sore muscles but always

insisted volunteers would, nevertheless, feel good. Indeed, they sometimes suggested that volunteers would feel good because they felt sore, the soreness having been earned in a good cause. The pain generated by the work and the leaders' effectiveness in priming a positive interpretive schema are both reflected in field notes that touch upon this topic:

After the work day, I was exhausted. I . . . could tell I would be sore tomorrow. But I also felt really good about what I had done.

I left at about 1:00 p.m. I had driven in many nails, my hammering arm hurt, and I had blisters on my thumb and palm. But I felt good about my efforts.

I left the work site tired, dirty, and cold, but I feel good about my efforts.

Another cost was the time sacrifice, and for some volunteers this sacrifice was especially great during football season. Thus, during the planning for a proposed work day, someone mentioned that the work day would conflict with the local university football game. A solution was worked out that would minimize the sacrifice of the volunteers.

They decided to meet on the faculty/staff side of the parking lot at 8:30 a.m. We will get back by noon or 12:30 p.m. . . . Volunteers want to get back by 1:00 to get to the football game. JK says this gives only two hours of work at the site, excluding travel time (half hour each way). No one seems to care, because the football game is high on their list of priorities.

Several work days were rearranged or shortened so as not to interfere with football games. The minimization of conflicts with other desirable events and the framing of soreness as badge of honor, both helped sustain volunteers high level of satisfaction with the work days.

Perhaps the most important determinant of volunteer satisfaction on the Saturday work days was the orchestration of the work that occurred behind the scenes during the week. Construction

was supervised by two retired building contractors who spent many hours at the site during weekdays to prepare it for the Saturday work days. Because they were building professionals who had an essential skill and because they spent so many hours on site during the week, these contractors were not required to attend the Tuesday night organizational meetings. But they shared the vision of the AMH leaders who conducted the week night meetings. In their preparations, they tried to ensure that volunteers would have a work day experience with which they could be satisfied.

When it came to home construction, most of the volunteers were unskilled laborers who had to be directed in their labors by the two contractors. The contractors essentially told the volunteers when, where, and how many nails to hammer in place. In order to keep the unskilled volunteers busy and to make the work day a success for them, the contractors had to do a lot of careful planning and skilled work during the week. Building materials had to be purchased, measurements had to be made, studs had to be cut to just the right length, materials and building supplies had to be positioned where they could be quickly accessed by the volunteers, etc. The first researcher was often able to assist the contractors during the week with the painstaking preparations for the work days. In doing this, he discovered, as his field notes indicate, valuable information about how to stage satisfying work days:

Much of the work we do on Saturdays is a result of careful planning and work by the contractors during the week. We would never be able to do the house raising this Saturday if we didn't spend all this time marking out the studs and where to nail and preparing all of the jacks, corner pieces, and door frames. When Saturday rolls around, the volunteers will do a lot of hammering, but the hard and slow work will already be done. I mentioned to B that by the time we get there on Saturdays, the difficult part of the whole process is already done, and he agreed. He said, otherwise the volunteers would stand around waiting for measurements, and not a lot would be accomplished. They would be disappointed in the work day.

As this passage suggests, the contractors carefully orchestrated what would happen on the work days so as to provide the most satisfaction to the volunteers. When the volunteers were actively involved in the construction of the houses, they tended to express their satisfaction with their labors. However, on those rare occasions when careful preparations had not been made, volunteers stood around and groused about wasting time and not having anything to do, as the following passage in the field notes reveals.

Today, we built a support beam that ran the length of the house and started nailing in the joists. There were nine volunteers today, four women and three men, in addition to S and one of the contractors. The first thing we did was haul some two by eight planks that we nailed together (three wide) to form a beam that ran the length of the home. S would measure the wood, look for the cup (arch) in the wood, mark the planks with x's, and we would drive sixteen penny nails every place he marked an x. While we were working on the center beam, there were long periods when we just stood around, waiting for S to cut or tell us what to do or figure out what he was doing. . . . Today we seemed to waste a lot of time standing around while S or someone got their acts going, and the volunteers complained about this.

As these passages indicate, successful work days had to be scripted by the contractors, and the point of the drama was to please the volunteers who acted in it. When the script was well made, the actors were satisfied; when it wasn't, they were dissatisfied. At AMH, the scripts were generally well made, so volunteers generally experienced considerable satisfaction with the work days. This is especially important in a society where discretionary time is at a premium.

Given declining voluntarism in America, organizations must recruit and retain volunteers by ensuring that they have a satisfying experience with the organization. AMH's efforts to ensure the satisfaction of its volunteers on work days was a major factor in its volunteer retention activities.

Fund Raising at AMH

The inescapable prerequisite for the home building that produced so much satisfaction for the volunteers was fund raising, an activity they generally found much less agreeable and that produced considerable dissatisfaction among AMH volunteers. AMH finances houses before or as they are built. Thus, in the long run, the financing of new homes will be supported by mortgage payments of previously built homes. But to pay for one new home a year, AMH must have twenty previously built homes, and at the time of this study, they had only eight. (The ninth and tenth homes were built over the course of the study.) Thus, in the seven years of its existence, the chapter had averaged just over one new home a year, far below what it could have done with better fund raising. Volunteer laborers were or could have been available, but the funds were not.

AMH received some funding from the local chapter of the United Way, and some corporations made occasional donations. And, as mentioned above, mortgage payments from previously built homes also contributed to funding the construction of new homes. However, these combined sources still left the local chapter short of the funds necessary to build new low-cost homes. Hence, the chapter had to rely on fund raising events to make up the shortfall. However, while volunteers usually found building houses to be a satisfying experience, the constant attention to fund raising alienated a lot of volunteers.

The importance of fund raising was apparent at every Tuesday organizational meeting, for in most cases, a majority of the evening was devoted to appeals for funds and/or discussion of fund raising ideas. Because it was less intrinsically interesting to most volunteers and inconsistent with expectations raised in the written and audio-visual promotional materials--which centered on work day activities and the happiness of the beneficiaries--this focus on fund raising produced a lot of dissatisfaction with the organization and tended to drive recruits away. Thus, attendance at the first AMH meeting of the new season was very high. The room was crowded, and late-arriving attendees had to stand, for there were no more chairs. However, most of this meeting was devoted to an upcoming fund raiser, not to the

building of homes, and attendance dropped precipitously by the next meeting. The approximately sixty attendees at the first meeting soon dwindled to fifteen or twenty regulars, who attended meetings, showed up on most work days, and participated in fund raisers. Dissatisfaction with the emphasis on fund raising was the major cause of the decline.

Ironically, the organization whose motto is "A Helping Hand, Not a Handout," constantly seemed to have its hand out soliciting funds from its volunteers. Some item or another--AMH T-shirts, mugs, bumper stickers--was offered for sale to the volunteers at every meeting. Even fund raisers designed to tap money from the surrounding community had to be bankrolled by the small pool of volunteers. As the field notes indicate, the volunteers had to provide seed money for a bike-a-thon that was designed to raise money from outsiders.

J has asked if each of the volunteers could donate \$5.00 to cover the costs of the T-shirts. We will get a T-shirt for our donation. She is very concerned about the costs. She hates to ask the volunteers to help fund the event [bike-a-thon], but she reiterates that she is worried about the costs.

In the event, J's worry was well justified since this fund raiser ended up losing money for the chapter.

The leaders of AMH understood that the constant focus on fund raising hurt attendance and participation in the organization, but without additional funds, no houses could be built. So they continued to harp on the need for more money. One consequence was that the Tuesday meetings tended to be boring, with the same themes repeated every week (i.e. this is the latest fund raiser, and we need you to volunteer to help out with and contribute funds to it). Participants complained that "we never do anything during the meetings." And even the leaders ruefully admitted that the Tuesday meetings were boring whereas the work days were fun:

C says that we need to come to work days because J doesn't talk so much about fund raising at work days. We all laugh at that, for J has been exceptionally verbose today. C

stresses that work days are fun and concludes by repeating that meetings are boring but work days are fun.

Attendance at the Tuesday meetings was a precondition for participation on work days in large part because many volunteers would not otherwise have attended these organizational meetings in which fund raising was discussed and carried out. But of course, there would have been no work days if the volunteers had discontinued fund raising activities and ceased to contribute money. On the other hand, all the emphasis on fund raising created much dissatisfaction but little money. In the course of the study, the organization netted only \$4,000 through all of its fund raising efforts, much of that (\$1,500) from a single event, a Christmas Tree sale.

Fund Raising versus House Construction

Contrasting the unsuccessful Tuesday night fund raising meetings with the successful work days, two differences are very apparent: the violation of volunteer expectations and the lack of professional behind-the-scenes preparations in the fund raising effort. AMH leaders understood that successful home building required the guidance of skilled leaders, the contractors, who supervised the work. As previously indicated, work days were a success only if the contractors had adequately prepared for them. Successful work days led to satisfied volunteers.

However, the leadership did not understand that marketing the organization to potential contributors would also benefit from the leadership of experienced marketing or finance professionals. The organization had no promotional materials designed to recruit volunteers with fund raising skills, and it did not actively try to recruit marketers, accountants, bankers, trust lawyers, or wealthy people with philanthropic impulses, volunteers who might have joined the organization with the expectation that they would focus on fund raising. AMH may well have been successful in recruiting people skilled in and committed to fund raising if it had sought to recruit them with promotional materials focused on the fact that raising dollars constructs a home just as surely as raising door frames.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Several important points seem to emerge from this study that pertain to the satisfaction/dissatisfaction experienced by volunteers.

It is clear that reputable charitable organizations have much to offer volunteers. The volunteers in this study experienced a great deal of personal satisfaction as they participated in building homes for others. But like commercial organizations, charities must take care to fulfill expectations they raise in their promotional materials and recruitment meetings. As in business, so in philanthropy, over promising can increase dissatisfaction and reduce long-term commitment to the organization (Oliver 1980).

The volunteers an organization recruits should be seen as the primary constituency, the most important customer. For the organization to succeed, it must satisfy first the expectations of the volunteer laborers. One key step in fulfilling expectations is an accurate analysis of the various functions the organization must perform, an understanding of the expectations associated with each function, and a corresponding division of labor. Some functions, such as house building with AMH, may not require special skills. However, other functions may require special abilities. Fund raising, in particular, may require special aptitudes and a special set of initial expectations in the volunteers who will be expected to carry out this activity, as well as a finely segmented donor population. While in some cases these two functions may overlap, they should generally be separated and performed by volunteers willing and able to accomplish each function in order to ensure volunteer satisfaction and retention.

Volunteers also form expectations about the personal costs of volunteering, and when these personal costs become too high, they tend to drop out or restrict their participation. AMH helped to reduce these personal costs by framing muscle soreness as a badge of honor and by rescheduling work days to not conflict with football games, in addition to other cost reduction strategies. Since volunteer burnout can be a problem, cost reduction strategies such as these become very important.

Finally, charitable organizations need skilled managers just as much as any other organization.

Since they rely entirely on volunteer labor, they should make a concerted effort to target and recruit volunteers who can successfully manage the various functions that must be performed in the organization. The satisfaction of the mass of volunteers will frequently depend on the skill with which the organization's leadership orchestrates the various charitable activities. With AMH, the volunteers enjoyed satisfying work days when the work days were properly orchestrated by the volunteer contractors, but the lack of successfully managed fund raising activities was a frequent source of volunteer dissatisfaction. The management of the volunteer organization is a crucial element in producing positive disconfirmations.

CONCLUSION

This study identified the volunteer as the primary constituency of the volunteer organization, discussed expectations associated with the various volunteer functions and the personal costs of voluntarism, and demonstrated the critical role management plays in meeting these expectations and producing satisfied volunteers. Given the trend toward declining voluntarism in the United States, this is an important contribution.

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