

# You've Got a Friend: Nurturing Your Friends of the Library

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# Sault Ste. Marie Public Library



*naturally gifted*





# Friends of the Library



- Promote public awareness and an appreciation of the library
- Support the library in the delivery of library services
- Raise and provide funds or materials in support of the library
- Advocate for library services

# **Volunteer Management Practices and the Retention of Volunteers**

**([www.urbaninstitute.org](http://www.urbaninstitute.org))**

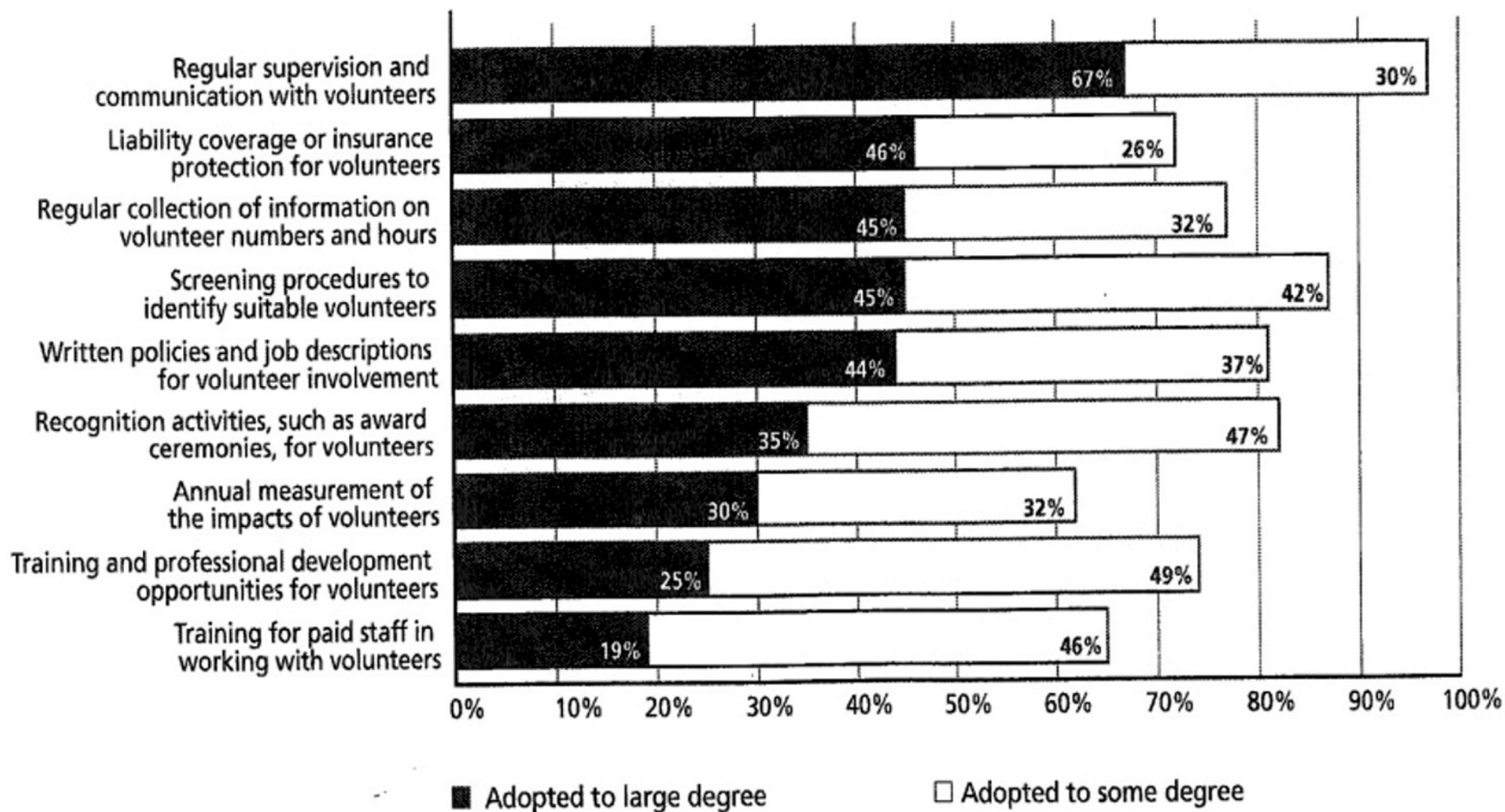
- 40% of volunteers stop volunteering because of one or more poor volunteer management practices
- Poor volunteer management practices result in more lost volunteers than people losing interest because of changing personal or family needs

# Making the Most of Volunteers

([www.ppv.org](http://www.ppv.org))

- No matter how well intentioned volunteers are, unless there is an infrastructure in place to **support** or **direct** their efforts, they will remain ineffective at best or, worse, become disenchanted and withdraw, potentially damaging recipients of services in the process

**Figure 1: Management Practices that Charities Say They Practice to a Large Degree or to Some Degree**



# Maximizing Volunteer Retention

- Allocate sufficient resources to support volunteers
- Provide a culture that is welcoming to volunteers
- Value volunteers and their contribution
  - Enlist volunteers in recruiting other volunteers
- Organizational characteristics tend to have an impact on retention of volunteers

# Invest in Your Friends

- Provide human and financial support
- Be prepared to devote time to the Friends
- Be flexible – Friends' needs will change depending on the skills sets of their members
- Provide meeting room space
- Provide space in the library for Friends' operation





# Bookstore



# Recognition



- Annual Volunteer Reception
  - Recognition Awards
- Ontario Volunteer Awards
- Newsletter
- Christmas Card
- Library Staff and Board kept informed
- News releases

# Communication



- Library Liaison position
- Regular meetings
- Board Chairperson attends Friends AGM and vice versa

# Know Your Respective Roles

## Library Board

- Library Governance (policies)
- Service Levels and Budgeting
- Advocacy

## Friends of the SSMPL

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# Role of the Friends in Relation to the Library Board and Staff

## COMMUNICATION

- Good Communication
- Fewer scheduling conflicts or misunderstandings

# Role of the Friends in Relation to the Library Board and Staff

## COOPERATION

- Cooperation between Board and the Friends - high level of support from each when needed
- Cooperation from Library staff - visible support of activities of the Friends important
- Importance of regular contact on part of Library Director, staff and Library Board with Executive/President and key volunteers - know their names, when they are regularly at the Library - drop in to say hello, show an interest in what they are doing and to say thanks

# Structure of Friends Board

- The Friends organization independent, yet a partner with the Library
- Sense of ownership important
- Appreciate that Friends Board members are very active Friends volunteers
- Level of organization varies with Friends groups, as well as how often the Friends Board meets

# Practical Support

## **By the Library for the Friends**

- Use of space in Library's newsletter, costs borne by the Library to mail this out to Friends' members, free photocopying, assistance with materials for book store, signs, paper, etc.
- Physical space for the book store, bins, storage space and space to sort and price books

# Practical Support (cont.)

By the Friends for the Library

- When Friends feel supported and valued, they will give of their time and energy to the Library in many ways
- Friends love their library and demonstrate the importance of the Library whenever they are carrying out Friends activities

# Fundraising

- Primary support is through fundraising, including project specific funding, money for buying books and magazine subscriptions
- Fundraising in the Sault:
  - approximately \$1000 per month in the book store
  - funds from bins - approximately \$500 per month
  - book sales - in the library, at the mall (3X per year), at the John Rhodes Sports Centre, outdoors in front of the Library in conjunction with RotaryFest
  - other fundraisers, such as Mardi Gras chocolate evening, annual garage sale, bake sales, have held a Silent Auction

# Practical Support (cont.)

- Public relations support -  
increasing the profile of the Library  
in the community - e.g. -  
distribution of bookmarks,  
promotion of the used book store
- Advocacy and lobbying when the  
Library Board requires it

- PRACTICAL WAYS TO APPRECIATE YOUR FRIENDS
- HAVE YOU THANKED YOUR FRIENDS LATELY?

# Keys To Success

- 1) Maintain Good Communication
- 2) We have Fun and Socialize!
- 3) Value New and Creative Idea
- 4) Decision-making by Consensus
  - which events to continue, which to let go
- 5) Effective Planning
- 6) Work Towards Good Organization
- 7) Constantly Recruit New Volunteers

# Keys To Success (cont.)

- 8) Have Job Descriptions
- 9) Generate Good Media Coverage
- 10) Maintain A Professional Attitude
- 11) Raise Significant Funds by Working Together
  - approximately \$30,000 per year and approximately an additional \$60,000 per year in donations for the Library's collection
- 12) Recognize the Importance of Networking and Conferences

# CHALLENGES

- 1) Recruiting volunteers, particularly for the Board and Executive
- 2) Recruiting younger volunteers - current volunteer base made up primarily of older people
- 3) Finding storage space for books
- 4) Finding people and willing or able to move books and available vehicles, especially if it is necessary to move the books any distance
- 5) Keeping up with demands to become better organized
- 6) Coming up with effective ways to promote the Friends and to recruit members and/or volunteers