

Q&A Column
Author: Mark Swartz

Email Subject Line: Turning Volunteer Work Into Paid Employment

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Headline : Turning Volunteer Work Into Paid Employment

Summary:

Question: Any tips on how to successfully move from a volunteer position to paid employee? What ways can I ensure being seriously considered for any future opening preferably at the location where I am currently volunteering. Thanks for your help.

Diane C., Toronto, Ontario

Landing Page copy

Headline : Turning Volunteer Work Into Paid Employment

Question: Any tips on how to successfully move from a volunteer position to paid employee? As a volunteer I am shadowing a specific role in a long term care facility and plan to take the required courses in college part-time over the next school year to fully qualify myself to work in this capacity. What ways can I ensure being seriously considered for any future opening preferably at the location where I am currently volunteering. Thanks for your help.

P.S. I am a mature candidate (in my 40's) which should also help my chances.

Diane C., Toronto, Ontario

Dear Diane,

Good on you for volunteering in the field that you're considering moving into. There is no better way to gain experience and references in a new vocation.

So far it sounds like you're doing things right. Shadowing a specific role in a long term care facility. And planning to take required courses part-time over the next school year to earn the necessary qualifications.

Other ways to boost your chances of being seriously considered for a paying job when the time is right? First, keep on doing what you're doing. Treat your volunteer work as you would a paid job. Put in your best efforts. Take on extra roles when appropriate. Help others to fulfill their assignments more effectively.

If you would like to increase your visibility with the decision makers at your health institute, here are some proven methods:

- Volunteer to be on a Committee, if possible, where your efforts will be appreciated by others. Higher profile Committees usually attract more senior members. This will introduce you to some of the involved individuals who may be connected internally.
- Identify key decision makers and make efforts to introduce yourself to them in helpful ways, such as volunteering to assist them on a project they're involved with, for example.

- Ask the people you work with and report to if they'll serve as references for you.
- Keep your ear to the ground for info about upcoming positions, people planning to leave, etc.

For readers who would like to know more about volunteering, or if you would like to be matched up to an appropriate opportunity, you can start your own search by visiting some websites that list volunteer opportunities. Volunteer Canada is at volunteer.ca. Charity Village (mainly not-for-profits with volunteer positions) is at charityvillage.ca. It's also possible to call or e-mail the Human Resources departments of employers you've thought about working for. Have a script prepared that emphasizes the contributions you can make as a volunteer. Let your eagerness to prove yourself show through. And help them understand that you will free up, not burden, their existing staff.

When it comes to securing paid employment, it's all about showing the people who might hire that you have what it takes and are keen to do well. Volunteer work in a relevant field is one of the best ways to do so.

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Benefits of Doing Volunteer Work

What You Can Get	Why It Makes A Difference
- experience in precisely the type of position you'll be applying for	- employers favour applicants who already know how to do the job they're advertising for
- a recommendation by someone in your field	- it's an endorsement the employer trusts
- new contacts	- they can help refer you into the all-important hidden job market
- something solid to add on your resume	- proves to potential employers that you have what it takes, and differentiates you from applicants who do not have related experience