

Top tips on writing role descriptions

Paint a Picture

Rather than just creating a task list of what you need your volunteers to do; think of your ask as a key marketing message to hook people in. Use warm, inclusive, and friendly language to paint a picture of what they can expect from giving their time to your organisation. Try to offer some flexibility where people can fit it around their other commitments.

Put yourself in the potential volunteers' shoes. What kind of things would you want to know before deciding to apply?

- How does this resonate with what matters to me?
- How will I be making a difference?
- How can I bring my own unique skills and experiences?
- What support and training will I get?
- What about my time constraints?
- Will there be opportunities to meet new people?
- What will I gain through participating?
- How will I know if I am successful in my role?
- Are there opportunities for me to develop?

Get Creative

When identifying what you want volunteers to do, make sure that you involve the staff team and current volunteers. Ask yourselves the following questions and be as specific as possible:

- What parts of the job do you really enjoy?
- Which bits do you find boring or not enjoy?
- What activities or projects would your organisation like to do but are unable to due to time restrictions or lack of specific skills or expertise?

Try to mix up fun tasks with more tedious ones so the role is not boring and just full of the tasks you don't want to do! Be open to creating role if someone contacts you with a specific skill if you feel it would add value to your organisation.

How will they be making a difference?

People volunteer for all kinds of reasons, but most will be driven by the want to make a positive difference. Be specific about the impact the volunteers will make and how this links to your mission and vision.

The role description should be more than just a list of tasks. Try to give the volunteer a sense of ownership where they can utilise their skills and own experiences; giving them an opportunity to go above and beyond.

- Give a timescale where appropriate.
- What results are they likely to achieve and how long is it likely to take to make a difference? For example, if your volunteers are going to be reading one to one with a child in school; how often will this be?
- State what the difference they will be making to the child's life over the course of a school year.

The specifics

Be clear on what skills, experience, and values you expect from volunteers. State what support they will get, including induction and on-going training where appropriate.

Include logistical information such as where and when it will be; travel expenses; upcoming induction/training dates. Remember to keep these dates updated on the Volunteer Matching Website.

Finally

Contact interested volunteers as soon as possible. It's likely they will have applied for more than one role. Make them feel valued before they even step through the door. Try to add a personal touch by calling them or inviting them in for a chat. If someone isn't suitable, explain why and try to suggest other possibilities.