



RÉSEAU DE
L'ACTION BÉNÉVOLE
DU QUÉBEC

THE PROFESSION OF

Volunteer Management

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ANALYSIS OF THE PROFESSION
AND FROM THE PROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR
ITS PRACTICE

Why produce an analysis of the profession and professional requirements for its practice?

The goal of an analysis of the profession

An analysis of the profession aims to provide a detailed description of the main components of carrying out a profession and, in particular, to document what the professional's work entails.

The report resulting from such an analysis generally contains:

- a presentation of the general context in which the profession is carried out
- a summary of the tasks and duties of that profession
- a list of the knowledge and skills required to carry out those tasks, grouped into fields

The goal of professional requirements

Professional requirements aim to define the knowledge, skills and competencies specific to carrying out the work of that profession. The report resulting from the development of professional requirements generally includes:

- a presentation of that profession's characteristics in terms of the role of the people carrying out that profession, the environment in which they are required to work and the resources that they use
- the foundations of the profession, that is, the context surrounding the application of the competencies, knowledge and skills to be mastered as well as the expected professional behaviours and attitudes
- a general and detailed account of the competencies required to carry out the profession

How were the analysis of the profession of volunteer management and the professional requirements for managers of volunteers produced?

Production context for the analysis of the profession and the professional requirements

In the fall of 2009, the Réseau de l'action bénévole du Québec (RABQ), a non-profit organization created in 2003 and funded primarily by the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale, commissioned the production of an analysis of the volunteer management profession and of professional requirements for managers of volunteers. With this project, the RABQ seeks to further its work on current trends in volunteer practices in Quebec and, in this way, enable the various stakeholders in the field to better adapt their actions to this new reality, particularly in the area of managing volunteer resources.

More specifically, the RABQ hopes to provide Quebec's volunteer community with two vital reference documents for promoting the profession and for recognizing the important role of managers of volunteers, and for encouraging more people to become involved in volunteer activities.

Setting up a project steering committee

At the start of the work, the RABQ set up a project steering committee in collaboration with its partners to guide the project and to support the work of the research team.

Procedure for producing the analysis of the profession and the professional requirements

To complete the project, the research team carried out the following activities:

- analysis of the literature
- construction of a representative sample of people to be consulted, taking into account the diversity of contexts in which the profession is practised
- planning and conducting of 57 interviews
- processing and analysis of all data collected
- preparation for and leading of discussion groups bringing together experts on the profession who were invited to validate the analysis of the profession and the professional requirements
- writing of reports on the analysis of the profession and the professional requirements

Active and generous participation of the volunteer sector in the project

There was exceptional collaboration from Quebec's volunteer sector throughout the project.

As well, the people consulted were highly representative, both in terms of their professional situations and their socio-demographic profiles. A few points to this effect:

- 63 people from all sectors of volunteer activity in Quebec, that is, from the 15 sectors brought together under the RABQ and other sectors such as those related to active listening services, event organization and business volunteering, participated in 57 field interviews.
- 31 of these people were consulted as experts in the profession. The majority are women, mostly with university degrees, with varying numbers of years' experience in managing volunteers, from all regions across Quebec, in rural, semi-rural and urban areas.
- 32 of these people were consulted as resource persons. They manage an association, a federation or another organization related to volunteerism in Quebec, or they are part of such an organization; they participate in training sessions for managers of volunteers; they work for organizations that are partners with the RABQ, including the CSMO-ESAC, the SACAIS and the Secrétariat au loisir et au sport of the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport; they conduct research on volunteerism, as is the case for André Thibault and for the members of the Laboratoire en loisir et vie communautaire team of Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, directed by Julie Fortier.

A hand is shown placing a light green puzzle piece into a larger structure of puzzle pieces. The background is a gradient of green and blue, with several other puzzle pieces floating in the air.

How might an analysis of the profession and professional requirements be used?

The analysis of the profession of volunteer management and the professional requirements specific to its practice have enabled us to determine that, in terms of the work to be accomplished and the competencies that must be mastered, the management of volunteers involves the same requirements across all sectors of volunteer activity. These results can also be used in various ways by the volunteer community, by people practising the profession and by organizations dedicated to volunteerism.

Use for the volunteer community

- Come up with a common vision for practising the profession in the various sectors
- Determine the means to put in place to promote and recognize the profession
- Ensure that all those practising the profession are able to keep up with changes in the volunteer environment and to carry out their work accordingly

Use for those practising the profession

- Discover the unique nature of their profession and the importance of the competencies useful for its practice
- Have access to information that can be used to support and direct their professional development

Use for organizations dedicated to volunteerism

- Set up innovative practices for managing human resources
- Ensure the continuous improvement of human resources competencies
- Have access to data that can be used for the following areas of human resources management:
 - ▶ Development of a description of tasks or a competency profile for the position of manager of volunteers
 - ▶ Recruitment and selection of managers of volunteers, including the drafting of the call for applications and the preparation of interview guides and other tools for selecting applicants
 - ▶ Refining of procedures for job integration and training for personnel hired to carry out all or some of the duties of managing volunteers
 - ▶ Performance appraisal of individuals holding a position related to managing volunteers, including the drafting of expectations and the specification of criteria for judging whether these expectations have been met
 - ▶ Training, including the specification of training needs, the choice of training activities likely to meet these needs, and the evaluation of the knowledge and skills acquired from the training in relation to job demands
 - ▶ Analysis and evaluation of jobs related to volunteer management and production of a corresponding salary policy

What are the characteristics of volunteer management in Quebec?

There are three typical contexts for volunteer management in Quebec:

- ❶ Volunteers are managed by a person holding a position dedicated to this function within the organization
- ❷ Volunteers are managed by a person holding a position dedicated to another function, but whose tasks include volunteer management
- ❸ Volunteers are managed by volunteer resources, therefore by people who do not hold a paid position within the organization

Regardless of the context, the work to be carried out and the competencies required to manage volunteers are universal.

Adapting to change

The turnover seen in the volunteer sector over the last few years reflects several major trends, which can be summarized as follows:

- diversification of reasons leading to volunteering and introduction of marketplace rules into the volunteer sector
- changes in people's relationship with time and its use, as well as their commitment to a cause
- volunteering by people from several different generations
- arrival of new social players in the volunteer sector

Thus, the people who manage volunteers must carry out their professional activities within a perspective of continually adapting to change. The issues are numerous and diverse. Among others, they affect day-to-day functioning, as managers must find ways to take into account the characteristics, expectations and availabilities of volunteer resources.

Vigilance in performing the work

People who manage volunteers must be very careful in performing their work, in particular with respect to their relationships with volunteers and people who aspire to become volunteers, so as to:

- prevent crisis situations or interpersonal conflicts
- avoid finding themselves in delicate interpersonal situations
- avoid finding themselves in a state of professional exhaustion (burn-out) because of the requirements of being available to answer questions or deal with situations at any time, particularly with respect to assisting volunteers

What is the work of a manager of volunteers?

Volunteer management is a determining factor in an organization's success. The duties and responsibilities of the manager of volunteers relate to everything that must be done in order for the organization to have at its disposal the volunteer resources needed to carry out its mission. They also relate to the implementation of the management, communication and facilitation processes that ensure the integration of the volunteer actions and volunteer resources into all the organization's activities, in keeping with the organization's mission.

People practising this profession therefore play a pivotal role within organizations. They serve as the liaison between volunteer resources and the organization's administration, including members of the board of directors who sometimes act as volunteers by offering their services to the organization. This role encompasses 8 functions, or areas of responsibility, with 40 associated tasks.

Various job titles

It should be noted that **various job titles** are used in organizations to designate the person who manages volunteers, such as **coordinator**, **administrator** or **director of volunteers**.

Role of managers of volunteers

Functions	Tasks
1 Analysis of the organization's volunteer needs and development of activities to meet these needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Determine the organization's needs for volunteers with respect to its mission, activities and services ■ Take stock of the situation of volunteer offers of service ■ Develop or update the description of tasks to be given to volunteers for each volunteer position
2 Production of documents required for managing volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Define the orientations related to volunteer services, or participate in their definition ■ Develop policies and procedures for welcoming volunteers and using their services, or participate in this development ■ Create and maintain the database containing information on volunteers and on volunteer services, or oversee this task ■ Prepare various documents and reports
3 Recruitment of volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Develop a strategy to recruit volunteers, or revise the existing strategy, and keep it up to date ■ Launch a call for volunteer applications ■ Analyze the volunteer applications ■ Select the people most suited to serve as volunteers in the organization ■ Verify the criminal records or perform any other background checks needed to select applicants ■ Draw up an agreement with each volunteer with respect to their assigned tasks and the terms of their volunteer commitment ■ Create partnerships with other organizations with a goal to recruiting volunteers
4 Supervision of volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Prepare a calendar containing each volunteer's availability ■ Welcome new volunteers ■ Inform volunteers about their assignments and any other matters relevant to their integration into the organization ■ Support each volunteer in carrying out his/her responsibilities and performing his/her tasks ■ Provide ongoing guidance and assistance to volunteers ■ Support staff who are supervising the work of volunteers ■ Assess the contribution of each volunteer ■ Deal with complaints related to volunteer services ■ Manage conflicts and crises
5 Training of volunteers and of staff involved in volunteer services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Develop a training plan ■ Prepare training activities and training materials, or oversee this task ■ Hold training activities, or ensure that they are provided ■ Evaluate the training plan and modify as needed
6 Developing volunteer loyalty and recognizing volunteers' contribution to the organization's mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Develop a strategy to retain volunteers within the organization and to highlight their value to the organization ■ Organize activities that draw on the experience and expertise of volunteers within the organization ■ Organize activities that recognize the contribution of volunteers within the organization ■ Honour volunteers and find ways to showcase their commitment
7 Promoting volunteer action and representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Develop and implement a strategy for promoting volunteer action ■ Represent the organization at various events or discussion forums ■ Make sure the organization's Web site is kept up to date with respect to volunteer action, if applicable
8 Performing administrative tasks and keeping one's competencies up to date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Contribute to the management of the organization ■ Evaluate the services provided by volunteers ■ Manage the budget related to volunteer services ■ Participate in fundraising for the organization or for volunteer services ■ Keep up to date on knowledge and skills for managing volunteers ■ Participate in research projects

What are the areas of knowledge required for volunteer management?

As stated above, carrying out this profession involves performing a range of complex and diverse tasks. These draw on three broad areas of knowledge: knowledge; skills and know-how; and attitudes, expected behaviours and people skills. The essential knowledge and associated skills, as well as the professional attitudes and behaviours that are expected from people practising this profession, are related to the following fields:

- human resources management
- organizational management
- project management
- interpersonal relations, communication and teamwork
- facilitation
- information
- social, organizational and legal systems
- professional ethics
- occupational health and safety

What are the competencies specific to the profession of volunteer management?

Competencies are the effective mobilization and use of knowledge and skills, as well as the relevant attitudes and behaviours for carrying out the work. The professional competencies required for managing volunteers are grouped into three areas, encompassing seven competencies. The implementation of each of these competencies is specified by actions and by their subdivision.

Competencies specific to volunteer management

Organization and coordination of volunteer applications; providing guidance to volunteers in carrying out their activities

Be able to fill the volunteer positions in the organization

1

Plan the organization's volunteer services

- Analyze the organization's situation with respect to volunteer applications and its needs for volunteers
- Write or review the description of tasks to assign to volunteers for each of the volunteer positions

Manage the volunteer recruitment process

- Seek out volunteer applicants
- Select applicants to assign to volunteer positions
- Agree on assignments with the people selected to serve as volunteers within the organization

Be able to lead, supervise and mobilize volunteers

2

Facilitate the integration of new volunteers into the organization

- Provide new volunteers with the information they need to integrate into the organization and to assume their role as volunteers
- Inform each new volunteer of what is expected of him or her
- Help create a harmonious relationship between new volunteers and the volunteers already working within the organization

Ensure that new volunteers are satisfied and effective

- Support all volunteers in fulfilling their responsibilities and performing their tasks
- Assess each volunteer's contribution to the organization
- Support staff who are supervising volunteers in the fulfillment of their duties
- Prevent or address problem situations

Foster volunteer loyalty and ensure that volunteers' contributions to the organization are recognized

- Draw on the experience and expertise of volunteers within the organization
- Express recognition of each volunteer's contribution
- Underscore the commitment and contribution of volunteers to the organization's mission

Be able to set up training for volunteers and for staff affected by volunteer services

3

Plan training for volunteers as well as staff affected by volunteer services

- Take stock of the situation
- Determine the most appropriate training activities for meeting the needs identified

Oversee the implementation of training activities

- Encourage volunteers and staff affected by volunteer services to participate in the training activities
- Ensure that training activities run smoothly

Evaluate the training

- Collect useful data
- Analyze the data collected and modify the training as needed

Management of key elements surrounding volunteer services

<p>Be able to contribute to maintaining the relevance and effectiveness of volunteer services</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Maintain watch over volunteer services within the organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Be alert to any changes that might affect volunteers or volunteer action ■ Address new realities affecting volunteerism <p>Develop tools for managing volunteers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Determine the orientations related to volunteer offers of service ■ Design policies and procedures for welcoming new volunteers and for delivering volunteer services, as well as strategies for managing volunteers ■ Draft documents and activity reports <p>Conduct the administrative follow-up necessary for managing volunteer services within the organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Participate in the continuous improvement of volunteer services ■ Handle complaints related to volunteer services ■ Manage the budget for volunteer services ■ Evaluate volunteer services
<p>Be able to manage data related to volunteer services</p> <p>5</p>	<p>Establish the schedule for volunteer activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Consult volunteers about their availabilities and those concerned within the organization about the time periods when they require the services of a volunteer ■ Analyze each volunteer's availability in relation to the organization's needs <p>Manage the database of volunteer offers of service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Keep the database containing information on volunteers and volunteer services up to date ■ Ensure that the organization's Web site is kept up to date with respect to volunteer action
<h2>Updating of personal competencies and promotion of volunteerism</h2>	
<p>Be able to keep one's own competencies up to date</p> <p>6</p>	<p>Seek to improve one's own professional practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Identify own needs for professional development ■ Determine ways to meet these needs <p>Engage in professional development activities and integrate the knowledge and skills acquired into one's professional practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Participate in professional development activities ■ Use the knowledge and skills acquired
<p>Be able to promote volunteerism</p> <p>7</p>	<p>Publicize the organization's volunteer actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Design a communication plan ■ Implement the communication plan <p>Represent the organization at activities affecting volunteerism and its development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Participate in discussion forums and events ■ Collaborate in carrying out research projects

... the core of the profession lies in establishing relationships with volunteers

In short, the profession of volunteer management depends on the fulfillment of numerous responsibilities and the accomplishment of many tasks, draws on numerous areas of knowledge, and requires mastery of many competencies. However, the core of the profession lies in establishing relationships with the volunteers themselves. Those who practise this profession are called on to manage a particular type of human resource, that is, people who are offering their time without any obligation or remuneration. Managers of volunteers must therefore truly like human beings, to the point of making them the focal point of their action, and establish with volunteers a respectful, open and genuine relationship—regardless of their personality, their age, their experience or their culture. They must also be passionate and believe in what they do, so that they can communicate this passion to volunteers and enable them to give the best of themselves.

This document presents the highlights of the analysis of the profession of volunteer management and of the development of professional requirements for managers of volunteers. The analysis of the profession and the professional requirements were produced by Éduconseil on behalf of the Réseau de l'action bénévole du Québec (RABQ) during the 2010 year.

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