

7 Top Tips for Effective Delegation: Skills Towards Work-Life Balance

From the Editor: Most of us are extremely busy in our daily professional lives—some days it may even feel like you are swimming upstream in molasses. When you are feeling stressed and overloaded it may be time to brush up your delegation skills. Since you are good at your job, people continually want more of the same from you, leading to being overwhelmed. On a positive note, you're being given a tremendous opportunity to get around your current limitation of time by sharing the work load with others. If you do this well, you can quickly build a strong and successful team of people, well prepared to meet the demands that others place on your programs. This is why delegation is such an important skill, and why we dedicated our front page to provide some useful tips to help you on your path to successful delegation.

by Lyndsay Swinton, Owner, Management for the Rest of Us

No matter where or who you are, there is a time and place for effective delegation. Whether it's getting the kids to clean the yard or your accounts manager preparing the annual budget, good delegation skills are essential if you want to achieve a work-life balance. The art of delegation, or doing more by doing less, can be mastered if you heed these 7 quick but reliable tips.

1. No Manager Is An Island. Even though others may have a different approach or standards, you're setting yourself up to fail if you think you have to do EVERYTHING yourself. Accept that in today's interdependent world, there is a shared responsibility for getting things done. It's not all down to you!

2. Delegate, Don't Abdicate. Remember if things go wrong, it's ultimately your fault! Assess the risk of failure BEFORE you decide to delegate a task, and manage any risk appropriately. The only person you can blame is you, for not effectively delegating the task at the beginning. And you never know, they might even do it better than you!

3. Crystal Clear Tasks If you can't define the task to be delegated, it isn't ready for delegation. Good tasks to delegate are; Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timebound.... or in other words "SMART". Fuzzy, vague tasks are impossible to complete or result in such a mess you've squandered more time than you could potentially have saved. Part of the art of effective delegation is creating SMART tasks from fuzzy ones and communicating them clearly.

4. Tools To Do The Job. It's universally agreed that sledgehammers are way over the top for cracking nuts, and in effective delegation, it's as important you select the right person to do the task. Some people could do the task standing on their head, others may need a bit of direction and coaching. As you decide who should undertake the task, make an assessment of their skill and will and change your approach accordingly.

5. I Say "Tomayto", You Say "Tomaato" You know what you want to delegate, and to whom, now it's time to communicate what needs to be done. You'll both be looking at the task labeled "Tomato" but there's no guarantee you're interpretations are the same. Even if you agree on the pronunciation, a tiny cherry tomato and a large beef tomato are strangely different fruit. Take some time to check understanding of the

delegated task, including details such as how to get from A to B, resources required, checkpoints and deadlines.

6. Give Them Enough Rope There is a spectrum of freedom in decision-making and action taking that you need to consider before, and during, the delegation process. This can vary from "give me the information and I'll decide" through to "you decide and do it, no need to check back with me". Again your approach depends on the risk of failure, your trust in the person and their ability to do the task.

7. How Was It For You? Effective delegation is about sharing workload, with the added bonus of developing skills and responsibility in others. Maximize the learning experience by taking time for shared reflection of the task once it's completed – what worked, what didn't work and what would you do differently next time? The most effective learning is two-way, with you gaining insight into your delegation skills.

These tips will help you achieve a work-life balance, and become more productive by doing less.

From: www.mftrou.com



Participants at the September 30 Dane County Volunteer Managers Conference, Creative Tools and Strategies for Effective Volunteer Engagement, co-sponsored by DCAVS and the United Way Volunteer Center enjoy networking and learning together. Anyone interested in helping to plan the next conference (fall 2010), please contact Sara Minkoff, sminkoff@wisc.edu.

President's Report

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Preparing to write my final column as President, has given me an opportunity to review my involvement with DCAVS over the past ten years. While tabling at my first volunteer fair at the UW, I was invited by Kellie Miller to the DCAVS fall conference. A regular attendee to DCAVS programs, I later joined the Membership Committee for a few years. In 2006, I was asked by then President Rachel O'Leary to fill the open Vice President Position. That August, I became Interim President when Rachel moved to New York.

I have been honored and humbled to serve as President of DCAVS. Working closely with the dedicated and talented individuals who have served on the Board during my tenure, we have accomplished much together. In conjunction with the United Way Volunteer Center, we have continued offering our alternate month "Lunch & Learn" programs and annual half-day conference and have further expanded our high quality, low cost programs to include: our annual celebration of International Managers' Appreciation Day (new to DCAVS in 2006); the Professional Training Series for Volunteer Managers (started in 2007) with an advanced training series being offered this year; and a special workshop in 2008 with Martin J. Cowling of Australia, titled: "Creating a Pro-Volunteer Culture."

The DCAVS Board has worked hard to maintain optimal levels of staff on the Board and committees. In 2009 we reactivated the Nominating Committee (currently consisting of Sara Minkoff, Elaine Glowacki and Louise Goldstein) to work on year-round recruitment for the Board and committees.

As a Board, we've also taken on some big projects. In March of 2008, we moved our "Lunch & Learn" programs to a more central location at the Madison Concourse Hotel. We launched a new web site and updated our brochure. (Jan Karst is currently taking photos at DCAVS programs to be incorporated into the next brochure update.) In 2008 our membership approved updated Bylaws. In 2009, we went "green" by eliminating paper production of our newsletter, replacing it with an electronic newsletter emailed to members.

As President of DCAVS, I've been privileged to share my thoughts with you in this column with special pieces relating to National Volunteer Week, the United Way's Community Volunteer Awards and two articles focusing on the role of the volunteer coordinator in dealing with the death of our beloved volunteers. Thank you for this opportunity!

I hope to see you at our final Lunch & Learn program for 2009 on Wednesday, November 16th. We will begin with a brief Annual Meeting to review accomplishments from our 25th year and to elect officers for 2010, followed by the presentation: "Program Improvement."

I'd like to thank Kadie Labadie for her many years of service to DCAVS. Kadie, who held the position as Volunteer Coordinator at Capitol Lakes Retirement Services, recently moved to Arizona. Kadie served as DCAVS Treasurer and Board member, participated in planning the annual conferences and Volunteer Managers' Appreciation Day celebrations and also served on numerous committees and project teams. Best wishes, Kadie! You will be missed!

In closing, I want to say that I have thoroughly enjoyed my time on the Board. It has been a time of incredible learning and professional growth, during which I've been able to work closely with wonderful, creative and committed colleagues. **I'd like to encourage each of you to get involved with DCAVS, now or in the future, through participation on the Board, a committee or project**—to support DCAVS as it continues to meet the professional development needs of Volunteer Administrators in our community.

Thanks much!



The Membership Renewal Clock is Ticking

To enjoy another year of valuable professional development opportunities, send in your renewal form today. BONUS: Any organization renewing their membership by December 31, 2009 will be entered into a drawing to receive a certificate for a free Lunch and Learn program in 2010.

If you need a renewal form, please contact one of the Membership Co-Chairs: Kim Viney at kim.viney@oakwoodvillage.net or 608.230.4238 or Diane Jones, dianej@westmadisonseniorcoaliton.org or 608.238.7368.

Give A Day, Get A Night Sage Supports Volunteerism



Sage Hospitality, owner of over 50 hotels (including various chain hotels) across the country, is honoring the contributions of volunteers to registered 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations through December 20, 2009 by providing free and discounted (50% off published room rates) rooms with documentation of at least eight hours of community service. Spread the word to all your volunteers so they can take advantage of this generous offer! Go to <http://www.sagehospitality.com/specials/giveadaygetanight.htm> for more details.

I Love Deadlines

by Jan Masaoka, editor, Blue Avocado

"I love deadlines. I like the whooshing sound they make as they go by." -- Douglas Adams

April may be the cruelest month (or so said T.S. Eliot) but December, the Month of Deadlines, can sure run a close second. "Wait a minute," we think. "I was supposed to have another job by now! I was supposed to have done that volunteer training by now! I was going to have called all our major donors by now! I was supposed to have found my life partner by now!" Not to mention the deadlines for holiday shopping, for making personal donations by the end of the year, and for cleaning your office.

But don't let deadlines - real and imagined - make you crazy. Take a breath. Or two. One of the best gifts I ever received was from two coworkers. They scheduled a 3-hour meeting with me for December 23. "It's an idea we have for a new project," they said. "We want to be sure there's enough time to discuss it thoroughly." When I showed up, they shouted "Surprise! There's no meeting! We're giving you this 3-hour period to go Christmas shopping."

Be a little easy on yourself this month, if you can. We can appreciate ourselves for not only doing much of the heavy lifting in service provision, but for binding and strengthening communities, and for providing the vehicles for giving back and for leading social change. That's all part of going easy on ourselves, too.

"I've been lucky to have a life full of love," said Diane Keaton's character in "Marvin's Room." ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marvin%27s_Room_\(film\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marvin%27s_Room_(film))) Her nephew asks, "Because so many love you?" "No," she answers. "Because I have had so many people to love." Maybe it's impossibly corny to take inspiration from a movie line, but isn't it by working and volunteering at community nonprofits that we find ways to give?

Adapted from <http://www.blueavocado.org/>

Volunteer Management Across the Pond

Have a few free minutes between projects? Interested in what your colleagues across "the pond" are up to? Wondering about volunteer management trends and issues in other countries? Check out the web site of the British Association of Volunteer Managers (<http://www.avolunteermanagers.org.uk/aboutus/>), a resource for volunteer managers in England. The site includes blog posts, videos, and a discussion forum, all available free. (Other benefits are available for a fee.) There is even a video of acclaimed British actor Sir Ian McKellen (think Gandalf from *Lord of the Rings*) talking about a volunteer project designed to provide volunteer opportunities close to where people work.

From the web site: "The Association of Volunteer Managers (AVM) is an independent body that aims to support, represent and champion people who manage volunteers in England regardless of field, discipline or sector. It has been set up by and for people who manage volunteers.

"The AVM aims to: facilitate and support effective peer-to-peer networking of those involved in volunteer management locally, regionally and nationally; campaign and speak out on issues that are key to people who manage volunteers; and develop information and good practice resources on volunteer management.

"If you manage, co-ordinate or administer volunteers or volunteer programs, directly or indirectly, then this is the Association for you."



Member Profile: Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center

Though most people know Monona Terrace as a convention center, fewer are aware of our two other missions: as community gathering place and tourist destination. We are so fortunate to have a team of dedicated volunteers who play a significant role in fulfilling these missions!

Most of our volunteers serve as "docents" or tour guides who lead tours for 3,000 guests annually. This group of 36 is diverse in background but united in their enthusiasm for Monona Terrace and its original architect, Frank Lloyd Wright. They are excited to share the Terrace's history and its design features, both those preserved from Wright's designs and those reinterpreted by his student Tony Puttnam. This year we celebrate the 10th anniversary of our docent program and the volunteers who have been with us since the beginning!

Volunteers also have the opportunity to work with school children in a variety of programs. Docents conduct workshops with "Froebel" blocks at local elementary schools. (Frank Lloyd Wright himself received a set of Froebel blocks at the age of nine and acknowledges them as a major influence on his geometric designs.) We also recruit architects and planners in the Madison area to volunteer with our Terrace Town program. In their role as classroom mentors, they lend their expertise to students as they design and construct their own scale model sustainable cities. The cities are later exhibited at Monona Terrace.

What are some of the reasons people volunteer at the Terrace? Some cite their feelings of pride and ownership of this project that took nearly sixty years to build. Some love the architectural and natural beauty. And a highlight is the chance to meet visitors from all over the world. Whatever their reasons, we feel fortunate that they have chosen to spend time with us and contribute their talents. For more information about volunteering at Monona Terrace, contact Heather Sabin at hsabin@mononaterrace.com or 608.261.4015.





DCAVS Annual Meeting and Lunch and Learn Program: Program Improvement

Join us this month to elect a new slate of officers to the DCAVS Board, get a report on the year's activities, and enjoy a presentation by Guy VanRensselaer on program improvement. Learn about processes and performance evaluation measures you can use in your volunteer program to enhance your effectiveness and the impact of volunteers. More details will be provided in a separate Lunch and Learn program announcement to all members via email.

Guy VanRensselaer has been an Organizational Development Consultant for over 20 years, working extensively with clients in the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors. His initial training was in Quality Improvement, but today he emphasizes a wholistic approach to organizational excellence.

He uses a hands-on "how to" approach that integrates theory and practical application in his consulting and workshop presentations. His broad experience provides a balance of the best contemporary management theory and practices, blended with the world "as it is" realism and a touch of humor.

Day/Date: Wednesday, November 18

Time: 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

Location: Madison Concourse Hotel, 1 West Dayton Street.

Participants are responsible for their own parking expenses.
Registration Deadline: Thursday, November 12, 4 p.m. Register by contacting Karen Fenster at karen.fenster@hospicecareinc.com or 608.327.7147. Registrations will be closed after 4 p.m.

The cost for this DCAVS Lunch and Learn Program is \$10.00 for members and \$15.00 for non-members. The cost includes meal and seminar fee. Payment is required, once registered, whether you attend or not. Everyone registered by the deadline and in attendance at the program by 11:45 a.m. is eligible to win a free Lunch and Learn Program certificate for a future program. A meal cannot be guaranteed to those arriving past 12:10 p.m.



DCAVS Membership Committee members (from left to right) Ella Benson, Co-Chairs Diane Jones and Kim Viney, and Kathleen VanDenWymelenberg hard at work at one of their committee meetings during the summer. More members are needed to serve on the DCAVS board and all committees to help DCAVS continue to grow and remain strong, so please consider joining! To find out more about board or committee needs, please contact Elaine Glowacki, DCAVS Vice President, elaine@glowacki.org

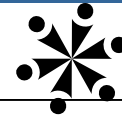


Nonprofit Resource Library

Are you looking for a way to refresh or improve your agency's volunteer program in 2010? Would you like some extra help or ideas for managing your nonprofit? Look no further, we have the resources that you need to succeed!

The United Way Volunteer Center's Nonprofit Resource Library is an excellent resource for new or experienced volunteer managers. With hundreds of titles to peruse, the library has a variety of resources on volunteer management, time management, leadership techniques, and risk management, plus numerous other subjects related to nonprofit development. Whether you are in the process of volunteer recruitment, seeking guidance with screening or training techniques, or simply looking for suggestions on how to work more effectively with youth or older adults, turn to our resources to help address your specific needs.

The Nonprofit Resource Library is located in the United Way Volunteer Center at 2059 Atwood Avenue, and is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. All materials are available for agencies like yours to check out for two weeks. Our library is a great resource for volunteer managers, as well as your executive directors, development directors, or board members. Come see what our Resource Library has to offer!



The Network is published bimonthly by Dane County Administrators of Volunteer Services (DCAVS) as a benefit to its members. DCAVS promotes successful volunteer administration by facilitating the professional growth of its members through networking and training opportunities, as well as providing support through advocacy for the profession of volunteer administration in specific, and volunteerism in general. Visit us on the Web at <http://www.dcavs.org>

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We welcome your contributions, comments and suggestions. Next deadline: December 3. Contact editor at sminkoff@wisc.edu or 608.263.7760.

