Vision 2030 Collaborative Community

5th May 2014

1. My Hands and Hearts

An overview of the presentation on volunteer recruitment and management through My Hands and Hearts.

My Hands and Hearts is an online volunteer portal. It was started in response to the increasing gap between a student's studies and the experience necessary for employment. It differs from a lot of platforms out there because it exists as much for the organisation as for the volunteer. Their approach is that the organisation and the volunteer are both beneficiaries of the relationship and therefore the skills that the volunteer gains are important as well as what the needs of the organisation are.

Signing up for the site is easy. You create an 'opportunity' which is the activity that you require a volunteer for. This could be 'tutoring' but could also be 'admin assistance' or something else organisational. Think about your needs.

The idea is that once you have loaded your opportunity, volunteers sign up for the opportunity (they have a growing volunteer base of 6000). The website then keeps a list of all those who have signed up. You can manage volunteers easily. Each volunteer who signs up is listed and you can accept them or decline them based on their rating and experience. You can also add external volunteers (those not registered on the site) to a specific opportunity and to your overall database though the opportunity management dashboard. An sms and email will then be sent to the volunteer once they have been accepted for an opportunity and all volunteers uploaded on mhah online database will receive an sms/email when any new opportunity is posted by you.

You can find a manual on the [Zone](#), which will take you through the steps to get you set up. You can find additional information and assistance on their [blog.](#) If you require more assistance or would like to request help to setup contact: Nicole Watson, [Nicole@myhandsandhearts.org](#), 0606209158.

2. <u>Solution Session</u>

There is a lack of cooperation and support from parents, teachers, school, learners and volunteers.

What is cooperation?

Cooperation is the action or process of working together to the same end e.g. the learners and the school's academic achievement. It is important to start looking at cooperation and support as two-way relationships, not necessarily equal in gain, but in the way you approach it. Meaning you need to make your offering as clear as your need and honour that offering.

2.1 Schools/Teachers

What cooperation do you need from the school/teachers?

Challenges:

1) **Schools don't cooperate for learner report collection and this effects impact measurement**
2) **There is not enough time to cultivate and nurture the relationships at every school and with every teacher**
3) **Reluctant/ignorant schools and teachers**

To reduce your reliance on the school, it is important to get learners to understand the importance of bringing their reports and to get parents involved as much as possible so they, too, understand the reason behind the request. It is also useful to **have the learners bring their reports as a requisite for their application**. This means that you at least have a starting point from which to track a learner's progress. It also sets the expectation from the word go.

However, it is also important (albeit difficult) to work *with* the schools. It is best to **identify key people to cultivate relationships with** rather than spreading yourself too thin trying to maintain too many relationships at all the different schools. A champion will often self-select at a school; this is usually the principal or a teacher or subject head. It is also important to **be strategic** when establishing relationships. For instance, if you need school reports, consider who it is that administers these reports. In this case, **it may be more beneficial to approach the secretaries rather than the principal.**

Be creative about how to get your message to teachers and the school. Remember how busy everyone is and try to minimise the amount of time you take up. Find out when the teachers have a **staff meeting** and organise to attend. Come with a clear **5 minute 'elevator pitch'** that explains the why, what and how of your programme. Try not to go into too much

detail but be open to Q&A. Try your best to honour the teachers and the job that they do. An example was given of organising a **teacher's lunch on International Teachers Day**.

The more you **involve school staff in events, activities, decision-making**, etc. the more the school will feel part of the programme and have an attachment to it. Once an attachment is formed cooperation and support naturally follow.

What cooperation does the school need from you?

Think about the cooperative aspect of the relationship you are building. **What can you offer the school/teachers** on top of increased academic achievement for select students; Do you have a **computer lab** that a school could use for classes? Could you run **computer training** classes with the teachers? Could you share or introduce teachers to **new resources** or tools to make their lives easier?

There needs to be an explicit understanding of the **difference between tutoring and teaching** from the start. This must be included in your 'elevator pitch'. Attempt to clarify that you are aiming to support the learner to learn and to support the teacher to teach, but not actually *do* the teaching. Teaching is their job and a lot of the time they are doing it well. **Emphasise the outcome** "With additional support this learner could achieve a code 7 in Maths, think about how this will reflect on you as the teacher and the school's overall result".

The outcome is important. **The impact** that the programme is having on a learner, and subsequently the impact that they school's involvement is having **needs to be communicated externally as much as possible**. Whether it is in your organisational newsletter or an article in the local paper get the word out there that this school is helping you and you are helping the school.

Ultimately it is important to be **open and transparent about your needs and what you can offer the school.** The school and teachers will hopefully begin to do the same and a supportive partnership will emerge. Above all else, be patient, empathetic and consistent.

2.2 Learners

What cooperation/commitment do you need from the learner?

Commitment = Achievement

75% attendance must be enforced to establish this commitment. Due to the **self-selecting** model for recruiting learners, there is a certain level of commitment in signing up. However, this needs to be maintained and regularly reiterated throughout the year in order to inculcate high levels of commitment and responsibility.

Make sure **ALL learners fully understand the point of 75% attendance from the start**. This can be included in the learner's induction and through the co-creation of an 'expectation contract'. It is a good idea to also send a **letter home** to the parent/guardian explaining that due to a high demand for services your child must attend 75% of the sessions or his/her place will be given to another child who is waiting. Issue a **mid-term warning** to

any learners who are dropping below 75% attendance again this can be accompanied by a letter home.

There are obviously legitimate challenges rather than apathy that can prevent a learner from attending. It is important to identify these challenges. Some common ones are clashes with school classes, transport issues, and household chores. There is no blueprint to addressing all these challenges and **discretion must be used.** One possible solution is to **hold make up sessions** for learners who have to miss sessions for legitimate reasons but are still committed.

Another way of increasing commitment is to provide **incentives and acknowledgement**. You could hold **termly prize-giving events** that acknowledge those who have attended well, performed well academically etc. These events could involve parents, which can help to increase parental involvement. If any **outings and excursions** take place you could explain that you will only select the **top attending learners.**

Don't under-estimate the role a **good learner-tutor relationship** can play as an incentive. By fostering quality interactions the learner not only improves academically but by engaging regularly with a role model their social skills develop too. This naturally improves commitment. It can also be encouraged that tutors suggest small tasks for their next meeting to **engage the learner in a continuous process of learning**. This could be as simple as finding out the meaning of a word.

The use of **grade mentors** can aid continuity. If a committed volunteer is labelled as a 'grade mentor' they **provide the stable relationship**, throughout changes in the tutors themselves. This can also ease the reliance on the organisation's staff for coordination.

Follow-up and feedback engage the learner in the programme. It will improve academic attainment as will **speak to their specific understanding** and it will engage the learner as they are being spoken to **directly and uniquely**.

Positive and constructive feedback play a huge role in changing the learners perception of what they are able to achieve, and the perception of ability to succeed or fail determines a learners motivation. Research into motivation has shown that if students are successful about 70% of the time they will continue to be engaged. Individualised feedback and recognition of success is therefore paramount in developing a positive concept of ability, motivation, and therefore commitment. During tutor training, explore 'feedback' and how it can be given to motivate learners (see 'How to run a tutor training' on the Zone).

Feedback also works the other way and it is important to **get feedback from the learners**. As mentioned previously the more you can **involve the learner in the decision-making** the more attached they will become to the programme, the more they will attend, and the faster their understanding will improve. See information about the Branch Committee here.

The co-creation of an 'Expectation Contract' is an idea to get learners input on their expectations of the programme and for you to present your expectations of the learner. (See Appendix A 'How to create an 'Expectation Contract'.)

What cooperation/commitment does the learner need from you?

Why are learners on the programme?

What is our role in their lives?

Are we adequately preparing learners for tertiary/work environment?

Human beings have a deep seated need for growth and achievement. Research done into motivation has determined that factors such as autonomy, mastery and purpose play a larger role than monetary or material gain in a persons' motivation. Applying this tutoring, it is important to continuously and regularly provide feedback to the learner that allows them to perceive their growth and achievement. This can be done through; tutor-learner relationships, report analysis, letters home to parents, certificates, photos etc.

If you're interested in motivation, watch this [animation](#) about what drives us.

You need to think about why the learner has joined the tutoring programme and hold this at the centre of all tutoring activities. Involving learners in decision-making will allow them to voice their needs and for you to hear them and try your best to meet them. It is important to get input from the learners as soon as possible when you start your tutoring programme and allow them to be part of creating it.

Remember motivation, or the lack of motivation is learned. Once you put in place strategies to increase motivation, and are consistent and persistent with these strategies, motivation will increase. Just be patient. It is also interesting to note the power of peer pressure. You will find some learners are more motivated than others and show a greater amount of commitment to the programme from the get go. Others take longer. There is often a tipping point, as soon as the majority of the group are highly committed that then becomes the norm. Low attending learners will not last long in this new peer group so they will likely improve their attendance in order to 'belong' to the norm or drop-out. Research has been done around this subject of peer group influence. Tina Rosenberg's *Join The Club* is a fantastic book on this subject and you can read some of her ides [here.](#)

3. <u>Planning</u>

(see appendix B)

Looking at the planning process as 'why, what, and how'

<u>The why</u>

What is the outcome or result you are trying to achieve *e.g. retaining volunteers*

<u>The what</u>

What are the five steps you need to get right to produce the result? e.g.

- Consistent schedule

- Time slots stay the same

- Involve volunteers in the decision-making

- Communication and training

- Appreciation

<u>The how</u>

How can you actually achieve these 5 points? What 3 steps can you do tomorrow to work towards each.

e.g.

- Print out a schedule for the year

- Populate the schedule with key dates

- Share the schedule with all volunteers

<u>The Cycle</u>

See the planning process as cyclical and ever building

PLAN – DO – CHECK – ACT

It is during the check phase that you are held accountable to your plan and you can refine the plan during the 'act' stage to produce a new result that will then inform how your plan develops.

APPENDIX A – HOW TO CREATE AN EXPECTATION CONTRACT

Co-creating an expectation contract

This can be conducted at the induction session, ideally at the first tutoring session but it can also be done at the beginning of any term. It works well if you can do it collaboratively with learners, tutors and staff but it can also be done with individual groups. This will take 1-2 hours depending on group size.

Present the programme and the non-negotiable i.e. 75% attendance and kick-outs, and why there needs to be an expectation contract.

Split learners and tutors into smaller groups (up to 8).

Give each group a flipchart paper for brainstorming session

Write up questions at the front of the room:

- What does a good learner look like?
- What does an ideal tutor look like?
- What does a good tutoring session look like?
- What do you want from the tutoring programme?/Why are you part of the tutoring programme?

If a tutor is in each group, task them with pulling out specifics e.g. arrival time, bad behaviour etc. Otherwise the facilitator must move about the room.

Ask each group to divide their list into 3 groups.

1) Expectations of the learner
2) Expectations of the tutor
3) Expectations of the programme

Then select their top 3-5 expectations for each group.

Present to whole group and facilitator to write up on flipchart at front.

After the session you will need to record all this information and draw up an expectation contract that will be signed by everyone who is involved in the programme.

APPENDIX B - PLANNING QUESTIONS

What is the outcome you would like to achieve? Describe it as clearly as you can.

What are the most important things you need to get right to achieve that outcome? What timeframe?

Now write each of those things below and work out what the next immediate steps for each one are?

1.

   a.

   b.

   c.

2.

   a.

   b.

   c.

3.

   a.

   b.

   c.

4.

   a.

   b.

   c.

Once you have worked out what the next immediate steps are for each area it is important to work out who will do it and by when. This plan then needs to be used with the following process.

Planning Process

Plan: Figure out what you want to do using the questions in the template above.

1. What is the outcome you would like to achieve? Describe it as clearly as you can.

2. What are the most important things you need to get right to achieve that outcome? (In the next 3 months / 6 months?)

3. Now write each of those things below and work out what the next immediate steps for each one are?

4. Who is going to do what by when?

Do: It is important to use the plan once you have developed it. Communicate the plan to those you are working with. Establish with them who is responsible for what. Build the plan into your weekly / monthly meetings with your team. Make your plan visible and easy to access. If you don't have a team yet, working through these steps will help you keep focused and working smart.

Check: It is crucial that you check on progress and establish what has been done and what still needs to be done. In a team this can sometimes be quite challenging especially in a volunteer organisation. The best thing is to keep it simple and clear. The weekly / monthly meeting is a really good support process for planning, reporting on progress and working out what is next. Used regularly this process is very powerful.

Act: This is a very useful step that is often neglected in planning. Once you have checked what is happening and what is not, it is very useful to take the observations and learning from your progress to shift and adapt the plan. Plans are shifting, moving, processes. Depending on what is happening you will always have to be adapting and responding to new information and challenges. If your plan is flexible and can go with the flow, you will achieve great results. That is why it's always important to go back to the question: What is the outcome you would like to achieve? Is what we are doing now moving us in the right direction?

These questions and this process are powerful enough to drive real progress in a team and organisation. You could use this process to develop a strategy for the year or you could use it to plan week to week or month to month.