

Today's VSys Voices Presenters



Abbey Earich is Deputy Director of the Office of Visitor Services at the Smithsonian Institution where she has worked for the past 8 years. Her experience includes having served as the Lead Volunteer Coordinator for the Smithsonian and as a volunteer manager for the Denver Museum of Nature & Science. Abbey managed the adoption of VSys as the Smithsonian's Institution-wide volunteer management solution. Abbey is currently serving on the board of the American Association for Museum Volunteers (AAMV) as the Mid-Atlantic Regional Director. She has a BS in Business from the University of Colorado Boulder as well as a Graduate degree in Non-profit/Public/Organizational Management from Regis University.



Lisa LaVigna, DM is the Vice President of Business Development & Sales at Bespoke where she focuses on helping existing and prospective VSys clients maximize their use of VSys One to reduce their workload and improve the volunteer experience. She previously worked at a nonprofit college as the Executive Director of Partnerships where she focused on recruiting, admissions and building strong relationships. Lisa is on the board of Jazzy Sun Birthdays, an organization that organizes birthday parties for children in homeless shelters. She also volunteers weekly at a local shelter for women and children.





VSys Voices:

Happy Volunteers = Retention

Keeping your volunteers engaged



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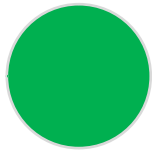


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Target Audience for Today's Webinar

SKILL LEVEL



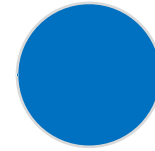
Minimal Knowledge

Looking for some basic information, key principles and “how-to’s” on the subject.



Working Knowledge

Integrated practices and moving beyond basic concepts. Looking for breadth and depth on a topic



Authoritative Knowledge

Looking for advanced knowledge, integration and concepts that are innovative and cutting edge.



Why is Volunteer Engagement so Important?

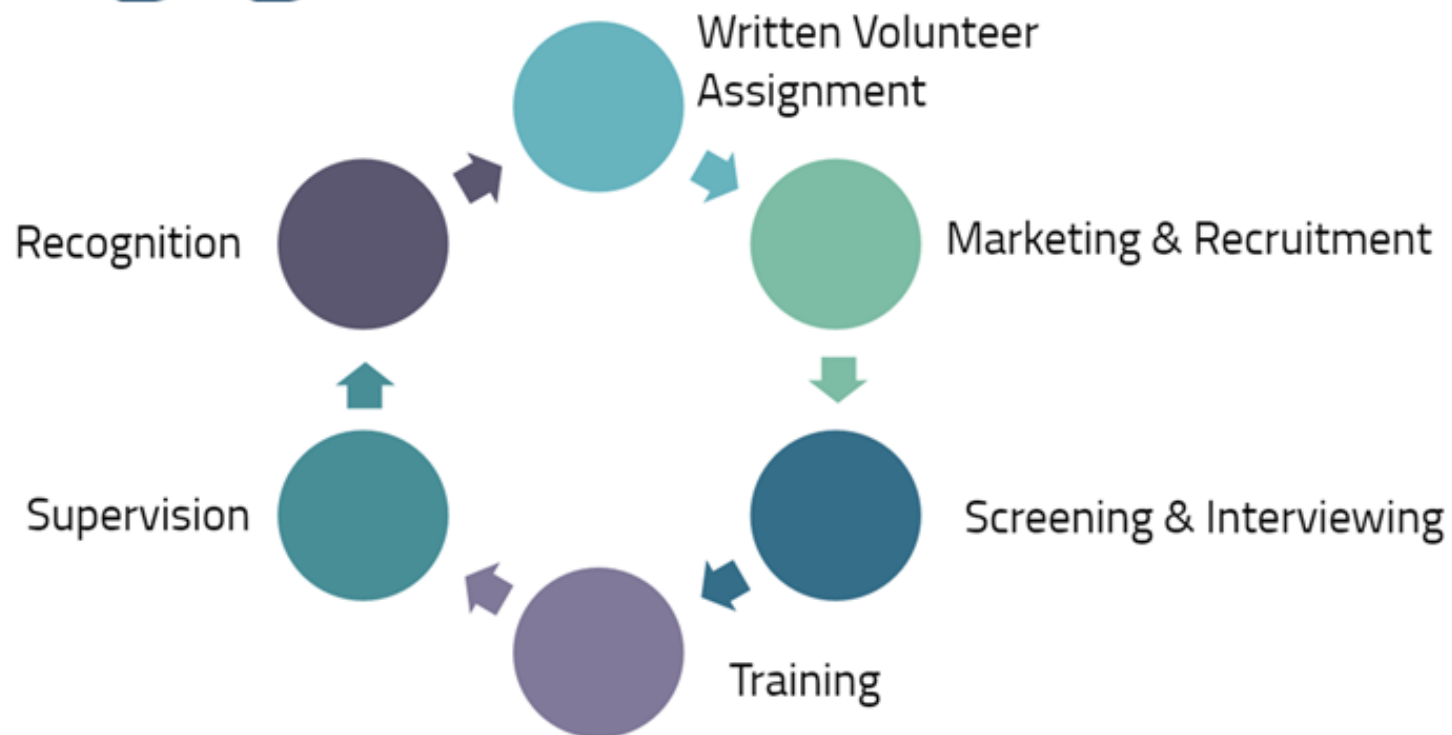
“Every interaction is an invitation to stay or an invitation to go!”

Dana Litwin



Volunteer Engagement Cycle

Phases of Volunteer Engagement





Challenges with Volunteer Engagement

Volunteer ▼

Behind-the-Scenes

Digital Volunteers

Smithsonian Call Center

Visitor Information
Specialist

Docent Programs

Citizen Science

Work with Us

Consider which roles and locations might fit your interests.

- Discovery Stations (Air and Space Museum and Udvar-Hazy Center)
- **Docent Programs (Smithsonian museums)**
- Education and Outreach (Natural History Museum)
- Education Volunteer Program (Zoo)
- Event Monitor Program (Smithsonian Associates)
- Museum Information Desk Program
- Public Programs (Postal Museum)
- Smithsonian Call Center (Castle)
- Visitor Services Program (Air & Space Museum and Udvar-Hazy Center)
- Visitor Services Volunteer Program (National Museum of African American History and Culture)

Prefer to contribute behind-the-scenes?

Smithsonian volunteers can serve in many important, non-public roles, working onsite at one of our facilities or even online from home. Join our staff in caring for collections, collecting research data, program administration, and other critical functions.

- Behind-the-Scenes (Smithsonian Museums)
- Citizen Science
- Digital Volunteers
- Office Volunteers (Smithsonian Associates)
- Special Events and Zoo Support (Zoo)



Examples of Volunteer Engagement Programs



Volunteer retention is critical to a sustainable volunteer program; providing a rewarding experience for volunteers builds trust and community. Retention efforts can include, but are not limited to, creating strong forms of communication, using a volunteer's skill sets in meaningful volunteer work, providing on-going enrichment opportunities, and recognizing volunteer accomplishments.

Communication

Volunteers who feel a positive connection with staff and feel good about their experience will continue with the program, and effective communication is the most important element in building that connection. Good communication with volunteers should be consistent, thorough, and clear.

Enrichment

One of the main motivations for the many Smithsonian volunteers is the ability to continually learn something new and to build on existing skill sets. Enrichment opportunities can provide positive learning experiences for volunteers.

Smithsonian Wide Enrichment

The Office of Visitor Services & Volunteer Management hosts a variety of enrichment opportunities both in-person and in a virtual environment. These programs include tours, talks, Q&A sessions with staff, and other special programming, based in both Smithsonian and non-Smithsonian locations. These enrichment opportunities provide all Smithsonian volunteers with the ability to increase their knowledge of our amazing Institution and build relationships within the local community. Visit the [Enrichment](#) section to learn more.

Program Specific Enrichment

Offering program-specific enrichment opportunities for volunteers is also encouraged. Organized by volunteer coordinators from their own unit, these opportunities allow volunteers to learn more about the specific museum or program in which they are placed. They are great team building exercises and help to create a community of volunteers within your unit. For example, behind-the-scenes tours are a favorite amongst Smithsonian volunteers.

Recognition

Volunteers' supervisors/coordinators should show volunteers how much their service is valued and appreciated through a variety of formal and informal appreciation efforts. Offering consistent and sincere recognition is a simple, yet powerful way to show your volunteers how much you value their contributions throughout the year.

For more details about Retention, please review the [Volunteer Management Toolkit](#).



Volunteer Recognition gifts



Volunteer Appreciation Day



What's needed to keep volunteers engaged?

1. Resources?
2. Time spent?
3. Contests/rewards/
gamification?
4. How do you encourage
involvement?



Example of Smithsonian Resources

Enrichment Opportunities

A main motivator for volunteers is the ability to continually learn something new and build upon existing skill sets. Additionally, enrichment opportunities allow for volunteers to socialize, interact, and develop a community within the corps. Activities vary and include tours, talks, and other special programming for the benefit and professional development of our volunteers.

Smithsonian-Wide Volunteer Enrichment Opportunities

The Office of Visitor Services & Volunteer Management hosts a variety of enrichment opportunities both in-person and virtually. These programs include tours, talks, Q&A sessions with staff, and other special programming, based in both Smithsonian and non-Smithsonian locations. These enrichment opportunities provide all Smithsonian volunteers with the ability to increase their knowledge of our amazing Institution and build relationships within the local community. Enrichment opportunities are typically offered monthly, with the format depending on the program.

In-person Enrichment Opportunities

In-person programs are typically offered with multiple sessions of each opportunity available to accommodate demand and the varying schedules of our volunteers. Announcements and reservation information about upcoming programs are emailed to volunteers, when the program is active. Due to space limitations, opportunities are exclusively for active Smithsonian Volunteers, unless otherwise noted.

How to Sign-up for in-person Enrichment Opportunities:

1. Log-in to your VSys volunteer profile at <https://vol.si.edu>.
2. From your **Home** page, select **Find Opportunities**.



A staff-guided tour of Deep Time with volunteers at the National Museum of Natural History in December 2019



Volunteers are learning about warp and weft during a tour of the GW Textile Museum in October 2019

Measuring Success?

- How do you measure volunteer engagement?
- Do you measure retention?
- Do you set goals? Have you met them?
- What benefits have you realized from these efforts?



Surveying volunteers

* 7. Please respond to the following on whether you agree/disagree with the statement. 0

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I found the Office of Visitor Services and Central Services staff to be accessible, professional, approachable, and helpful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<div>Comments</div> <div></div>		

I found my Museum Volunteer Coordinator to be accessible, professional, and approachable, and helpful	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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* 8. Overall, how satisfied were you with your experience as a volunteer with us? 0

Strongly dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Strongly Satisfied
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I received adequate training on my role	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<div>Additional Comments</div> <div></div>
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I would recommend others to volunteer in this position	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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9. What was the most enjoyable thing about volunteering with us? 0

I would recommend the Smithsonian to others as a good place to volunteer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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10. What was the least enjoyable thing about volunteering with us? 0



Engaging virtual volunteers?

 **Smithsonian**

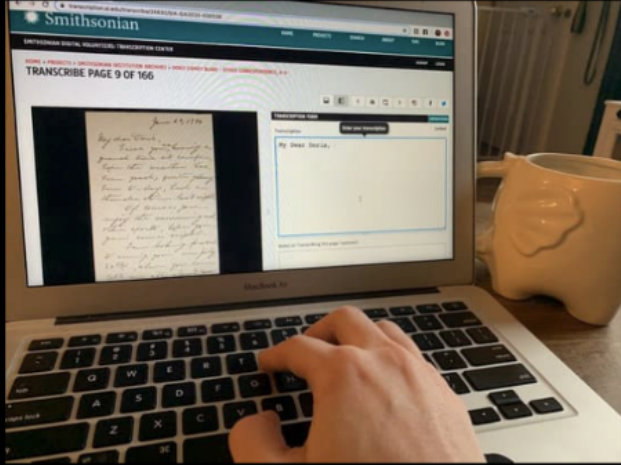
HOMEPROJECTSSEARCHABOUTTIPSBLOG

Smithsonian Digital Volunteers: Transcription CenterSIGN UPLOGIN

Transcription Tips

Find instructions and resources for transcription and review, community guidelines, FAQs, and more.

[Get Started](#)



Join Us!

Learn How to Transcribe

Become a Smithsonian Digital Volunteer and help us make historical documents and biodiversity data more accessible.

Browse Projects

Select a category below to begin browsing projects.

Select a Category

Happening Now

ksnyder6 transcribed the page AAA-jacqself00138-000151 from Germain Seligman: Correspondence, 1950 June-July

type39 reviewed the page NMAAHC-





Take Aways

- 1 Integrate engagement throughout the volunteer journey
- 2 Make it fun
- 3 Don't overthink it – simple can be best
- 4 Listen to your existing volunteers
- 5 Do exit interviews





Share your ideas for engaging volunteers
&/or
Questions for Abbey



Thank you for joining us!

