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Volunteer Management: The Case of Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games

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Volunteer Management: The Case of Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games



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Abstract

Volunteer management is an integral part of any event that relies on volunteer contributions. Managing volunteers for events is related to three related domains: events, human resources, and volunteering. Each of the domains is discussed for its relation to volunteer management in the context of a sport event. The practice of managing volunteers is considered in terms of its phases. A real-life case is provided so that students can apply their understandings of volunteer management in resolving the case problems.

Key topics

Event volunteer management, volunteering, human resource management, recruitment, Olympics games

Target Audience

Students enrolled in an event management or non-profit management course.

Pedagogy

This case study has been designed for use in an active learning pedagogy, such as team-based learning, case studies, peer teaching, debates, just-in-time teaching, and other active learning pedagogies.

Learning objectives

1. Describe the three key components of volunteer management.
2. Identify the key steps for event volunteers to take in human resource management.
3. Discuss different types of volunteers needed for events.
4. Describe the effective measures of volunteer management.
5. List approaches that can be implemented in motivating event volunteers.

Teaching Plan

	Element	Suggested Time
1	Review Event Volunteer Management Framework	30-40 minutes
2	Review Tokyo 2020 Summer Olympics Case Study	30-40 minutes
3	Case Problems	15-20 minutes
4	Specific Questions/Choice	15-20 minutes

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Disclaimer

This case study is to be solely used for educational purposes and is based on both factual and fictional information.

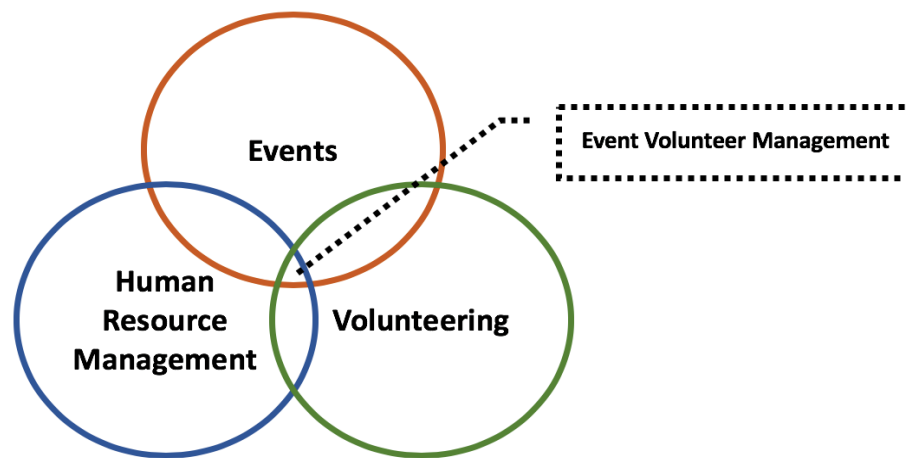
Event Volunteer Management Framework

Event Volunteer Management

Event volunteer management is a topic that has evolved out of synthesizing three related domains for special events. Figure 1 shows the domains that constitute event volunteer management: events, human resource management, and volunteering (Kim & Cuskelly, 2017). The following sections discuss each of the areas in brief.

Figure 1

Key Domains of Event Volunteer Management



Note. Adapted from “A Systematic Quantitative Review of Volunteer Management in Events” by E. Kim and G. Cuskelly, 2017, *Event Management*, 21, p. 84.

Events

Events are gatherings of people organized for a purpose in different locations and sizes. An event can be a rural festival that mostly draws local residents from the area. On the opposite side of the spectrum, there is an event like the World Cup, staged at multiple venues and celebrated on a global scale. An event can be one-time or repeated. An event can be organized for various reasons: cultural, economic, political, social, and others. Regardless of the classification of events, managers of most events rely on the involvement of volunteers in the organization and operation stage.

Volunteer

Volunteering is non-compulsory work or activities in which individuals engage to provide benefits for an organized event (Cuskelly, Taylor, Hoyer, & Darcy, 2006). Event volunteers work without pay or sometimes for a small remuneration (Wicker, 2017), but they bring invaluable benefits to the event for which they volunteer. One such benefit is intangible qualities, such as

care, enthusiasm, and local knowledge exhibited in encounters with event attendees (Goffee & Jones, 2012). Event organizers can use volunteers' unique and diverse experiences and skills as irreplaceable assets for organizing and operating the event. Therefore, volunteers play important roles in affecting the quality of the event experience and its successful execution.

Volunteer Motivations

Volunteers are motivated to serve for a variety of reasons. Volunteers of a mega event are motivated by internal and external reasons (Lee, Reisinger, Kim, & Yoon, 2014). They are driven internally by their sense of patriotism and altruism. Their contributions are related to their internal motives (Lee et al., 2014). For sporting events, some volunteers offer their services for their "love of sports" (Doherty, 2009; Kim, Fredline, & Cuskelly, 2018). However, such internal rewards are not the only motive why people volunteer. Others are enticed for extrinsic rewards, such as free tickets and admission, food, or event uniforms (Kim et al., 2018). Individual volunteer motivations further vary by demographic profiles of volunteers. For example, relative to other age groups, people over 65 are driven by their altruistic spirits in serving communities (Kim et al., 2018). Education levels have a positive association with volunteerism (Wicker, 2017). Thus, the individual reasons for volunteering can vary depending on multiple internal and external elements.

Determining Factors in the Use of Volunteers

The number of volunteers and skills needed for an event differ depending on the sizes and types of event. For example, in the 2019 Super Bowl in Atlanta, the United States enlisted 10,000 volunteers to run the national event. By contrast, the committee of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics in Japan expects to enlist more than 90,000 volunteers over the duration of the event (Tokyo 2020, n.d.). The organizers of such a multinational event seek a wide range of skill sets from diverse volunteers. On the website of their volunteer program, the organizers of the Tokyo Games list a total of 10 different job areas for which potential volunteers can apply:

- 1) Any areas volunteers are willing to work in
- 2) Guidance
- 3) Events
- 4) Mobility support
- 5) Personal support
- 6) Operational support
- 7) Healthcare
- 8) Technology
- 9) Media
- 10) Ceremonies (Tokyo 2020, n.d.)

For a statewide or municipal sport event, however, the extent of reliance on volunteers is likely substantially limited for the number and expertise areas sought from volunteers.

Another factor influencing the use of volunteers is the length of time that volunteers are needed. The term of volunteer service length can be classified into short, long, or episodic periods. Short-term volunteers are recruited for service at a recurring event, either once or regularly, over the

duration of the short-term event. Long-term volunteers are needed for a recurring event for an extended length of time. Episodic volunteers are signed up for an event that occurs once or occasionally. For example, there are two groups of volunteers for a national sport event with different lengths of service: planning volunteers and onsite volunteers (Doherty, 2009). Volunteers on the planning side get involved in the event months or years ahead, prior to the opening of the event. By contrast, onsite volunteers are active during the games, carrying out duties ranging from administrative work to transporting attendees or athletes. The need for volunteers for different lengths of service has implications for human resources management.

Event Human Resource Management

Event human resource management (EHRM) is a collective term for practices designed to manage human resources, including volunteers, for events. Effective EHRM is one of the critical elements that determine the perceived satisfaction of volunteer experiences and their retention for future events (Cuskelly et al., 2006). Event organizers must remain aware of unique challenges of managing volunteers for events. Three characteristics of an event create such difficulties. First, many events recruit volunteers for a short duration of time or on the need-basis for some sections of the event. Secondly, the event organizers tend to be given a tight timeline for hiring and managing volunteer staff; often, they face the reality of volunteer shortages. In such cases, volunteers are asked to carry the extra workload from being short-staffed (Wicker & Breuer, 2011). Thirdly, volunteers tend to be people with diverse personalities, volunteer motivations, sociodemographic backgrounds, and skills. These factors all underscore the importance of the efficacy of human resources management in managing volunteers.

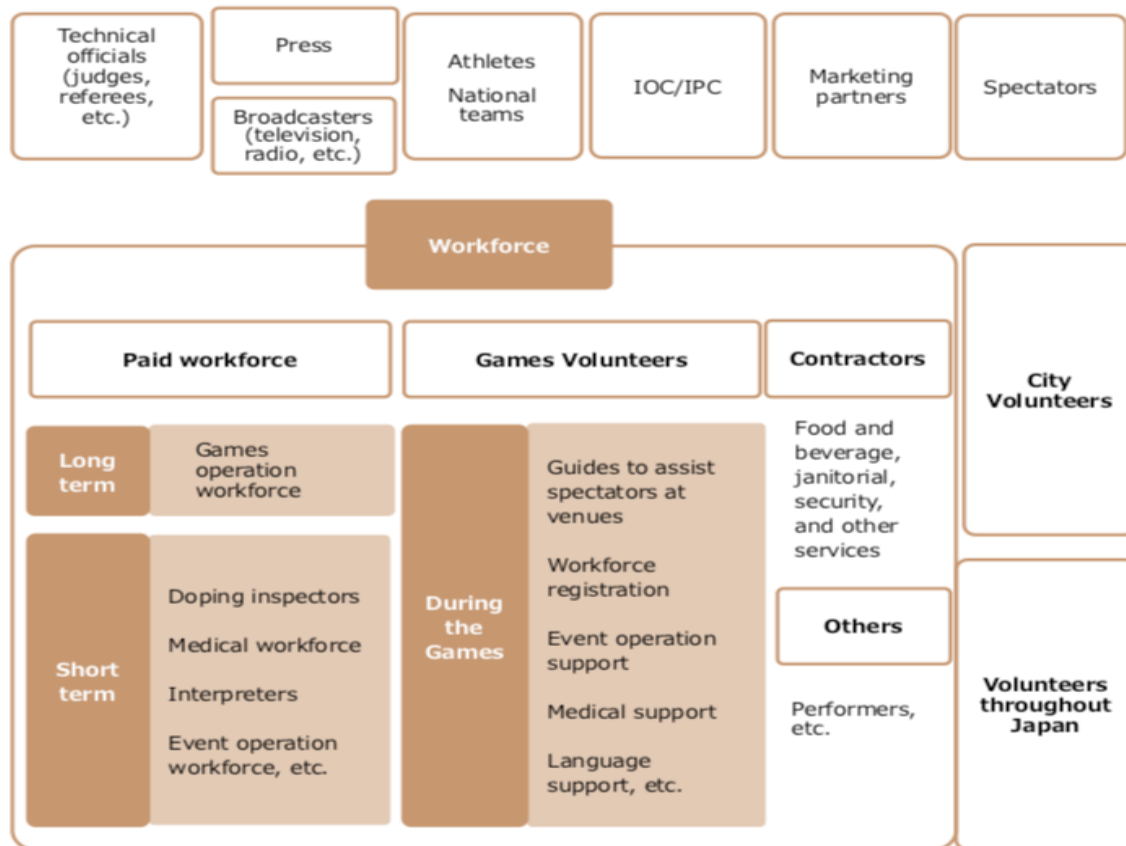
The practice of EHRM ensures an adequate number of highly-engaged volunteers is supplied for an event by optimizing the human resource process of recruiting volunteers. Securing a target number of volunteers for the duration of the event is a primary concern for event organizers. The implementation of EHRM can be an effective measure to provide an adequate supply of volunteers and handle motivation issues. EHRM can be broken down into six different phases:

- 1) Development of job descriptions and specifications
- 2) Recruitment
- 3) Volunteer training
- 4) Supervision and evaluation
- 5) Termination
- 6) Retention

Through these stages, volunteers are recruited systematically, trained, and assigned to duties for which they are evaluated to be suitable. Figure 2 displays the organizational chart of the volunteer workforce and areas to which volunteers are assigned for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games (Tokyo Metropolitan Government [TMG] & Tokyo Organizing Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games [TOCOPG], 2016).

Figure 2

The Organizational Chart of the Workforce for Tokyo's 2020 Olympic Games



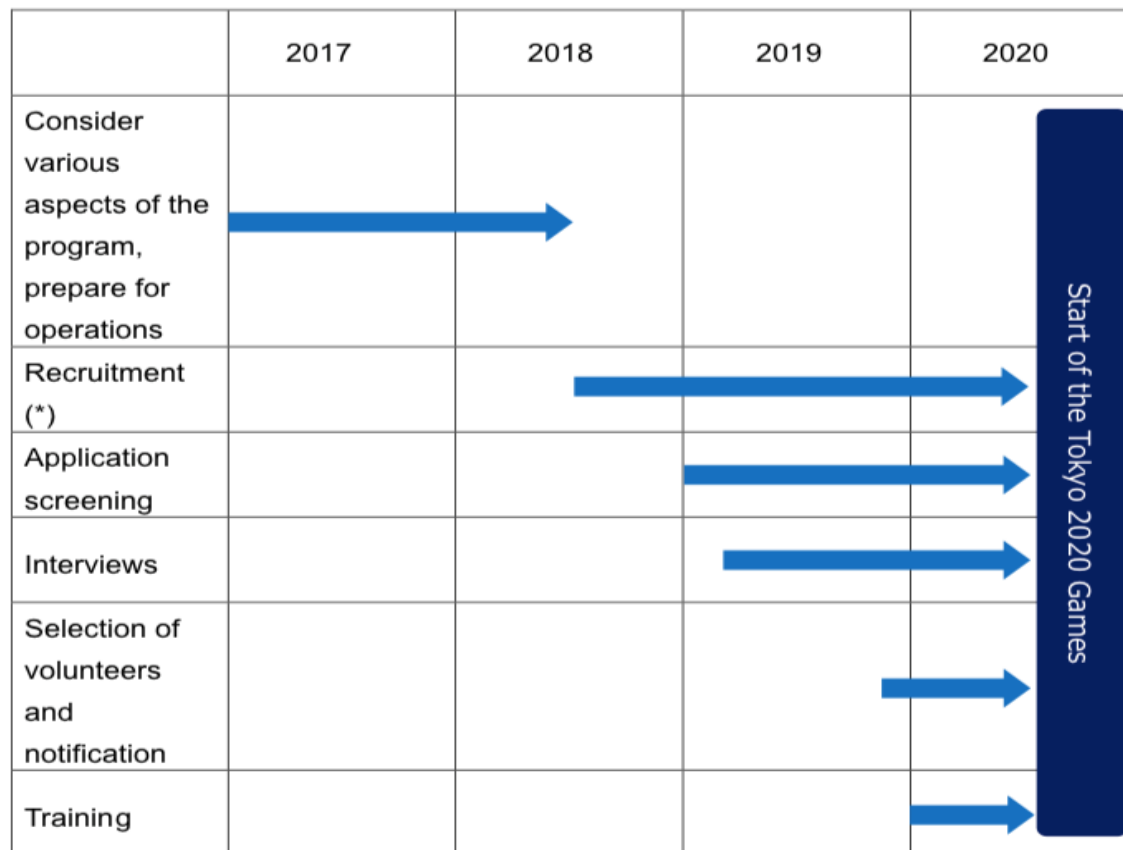
Note. From “Volunteering Strategy for the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020,” by Tokyo Metropolitan Government and Tokyo Organizing Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, 2016 (https://tokyo2020.org/jp/get-involved/volunteer/data/volunteer-summary_EN.pdf). In the public domain.

Volunteer management

From the perspective of EHRM, volunteer management is a set of practices implemented at the organizational level for managing a voluntary workforce (Wicker, 2017). The practices comprise human sources aspects (Cuskelly et al., 2006). The volunteer management process can be undertaken in the six phases, as previously discussed. However, the process can be modified depending on volunteers' experience levels, especially for a recurring event. For returning volunteers, the recruitment process begins by scanning a pool of past volunteers. Recruiting past volunteers obviates the need for extensive training, allowing the training process to be shortened, and resulting in saving time and costs. For new volunteers, the process is focused on allocating an adequate level of resources and training to ensure that they are adequately fit for their respective jobs. Figure 3 displays the draft schedule of the volunteer program for Tokyo's 2020 Olympic Games, with the timeline for the different phases to be completed before the games (TMG & TOCOPG, 2016).

Figure 3

The Schedule of the Volunteer Program for the 2020 Tokyo Games



Note. From “Volunteering Strategy for the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020,” by Tokyo Metropolitan Government and Tokyo Organizing Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, 2016 (https://tokyo2020.org/jp/get-involved/volunteer/data/volunteer-summary_EN.pdf). In the public domain.

1. Developing job descriptions and specifications

Volunteer job descriptions and specifications are developed in consideration of the delegation of work to volunteers. The drafting of these documents ensures the recruitment program addresses the specific needs of the event in selecting volunteers.

2. Recruitment

The key goal of a volunteer recruitment program is to secure the number of volunteers needed for the event. This phase involves estimating human resources costs and constructing a budget for recruitment advertising and the screening process. The screening methods comprise interviews, tests, credentials and background checks, or a combination of any of these. The 2020

Tokyo Olympics Committee anticipates that more than 90,000 people will be needed to serve as volunteers for the games. The number was estimated based on the previous two Olympic Games.

3. Training volunteers

The purpose of volunteer training is to provide volunteers with specific job skills/knowledge that they will be assigned to perform for the event. Past volunteering experiences will determine the extent and duration of the training needed for volunteers. New volunteers are properly matched to duties with which they are skilled. This matching process can reduce the amount of training which they undergo, and their job performance can be optimized.

4. Supervision and evaluation

The importance of supervision is especially heightened in volunteer management when the event is large in size and complexity. The supervisory tasks for volunteers involve conducting performance appraisals, communicating role clarity to staff volunteers, and providing support and attention when the intensity of their duties overwhelms the volunteers. Part of the supervision also entails the conduct of performance evaluation with staff volunteers, so the areas of improvement are identified; thus, a remedial plan for improvement can be implemented.

5. Termination or dismissal

Occasions arise when a volunteer needs to be dismissed; conflict with other volunteers or intoxication on site can be some of the reasons for dismissal. Before a volunteer is fired for any wrongdoing however, legal experts and human resources personnel must be first notified and consulted about the best course of action to be taken. In the event of termination, the volunteer committee should consider the legal implications of the action and abide by due process to avoid unnecessary claims of unlawful termination.

6. Retention

Volunteer retention refers to the effort to bring volunteers back to serve in future events. Volunteer retention rates can improve when volunteers are motivated to serve. One way to increase retention is to conduct a volunteer survey with questions that solicit the rating of volunteer experiences and the levels of their commitment to the event in the future. Based on feedback, the volunteer program should be assessed for its strengths and weaknesses. Establishing a social network with volunteers is another way to increase the retention rate. Maintaining contact with volunteers allows the event committee to access them when needed. For example, the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Committee plans to bring back those who participate in the 2019 Rugby World Cup in Japan to serve the Olympic games the following year.

The benefits of retention include a reduction in the use of human resources and training efforts, and higher levels of job performance. In addition, individuals in the network are likely to continue their volunteering services for the community or other events. A case in point is volunteers for the London 2012 Olympic Games who built an online network of community among themselves; through the network, they remain in touch with other volunteers, exchanging

information on volunteer opportunities. This network serves as a useful information source for them to continue to serve, even after the games have ended.

Tokyo 2020 Summer Olympics Case Study

This case study and case problems that follow were adapted from the publicly available volunteer strategy for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics (TMG & TOCOPG, 2016).

Japan will host the 2020 Summer Olympics from July 24 to August 9 in Tokyo. The event, commonly known as Tokyo 2020, will be the second hosting by the country after the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. Most games will be played at venues within the prefecture of Tokyo or areas nearby. Twenty-eight of 32 competition venues are clustered around Tokyo within a 5-mile radius of the Olympic village, the residence facilities for athletes and staff. Eleven new venues are currently under construction. The Tokyo Metropolis is the largest metropolitan city in Japan. In fact, the Greater Tokyo area and its surrounding cities represent the most populous city in the world. Tokyo has a population of 39 million residents, with an economy equivalent in size to the eighth largest economy in the world.

Volunteer program

The Tokyo 2020 Olympics has a vision statement, “Unity in Diversity.” The 2020 Olympics Committee promotes this vision in the volunteer program by encouraging volunteer participation from people with diverse backgrounds. One of the program’s goals is that through the volunteering experience, people will continue to remain active in their volunteering roles in their communities after the games.

The committee has implemented the volunteer program of the London 2012 Games as its template for running its volunteer program. The program has volunteers organized into two groups with different roles for the games: game volunteers and city volunteers. Figure 4 shows the two types of volunteers in deployment for the London 2012 Games.

Figure 4

Game (left) and City (right) Volunteers of the London 2012 Games



Note. From “Volunteering Strategy for the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020,” by Tokyo Metropolitan Government and Tokyo Organizing Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, 2016 (https://tokyo2020.org/jp/get-involved/volunteer/data/volunteer-summary_EN.pdf). In the public domain.

Game volunteers aid in the operation at the competition venues, media centers, and Olympic villages. The tasks involve providing support in the following areas: operation of games at the venues, security checks at the Olympics facilities, operation of the Olympics village, registration and issuance of IDs for the Olympic athletes and staff, and equipment checks and distribution of them to the venues. They are active prior to and for the duration of the games. Table 1 depicts a sample of the job descriptions and specifications for “games volunteers” for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics (TMG & TOCOPG, 2016).

City volunteers guide those visitors with tourism and transportation information and, provide them with directions to game venues. City volunteers are deployed for athletes, staff members, and visitors at major transportation points, such as airports, major train stations, and popular tourist attractions. Special booths are set up at those locations to welcome athletes, staff personnel, and spectators to Japan.

Volunteer leaders of either group are responsible for checking attendance of team members and acting as liaisons in the event of emergencies.

Table 1.

Job Descriptions and Specifications for “Games Volunteers” for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

Activity	Description (Examples)
Guidance at venues	Guide spectators and those affiliated with the games at venues, check tickets, provide support for regulating entrance to venues, etc.
Doping control	Provide support for doping inspectors as they test athletes who have finished competition.
Driver	Transport those affiliated with the games between venues by car.
workforce registration	Sign in workforce at venues. Check the workforce member’s shift by referring to their personal ID and relay necessary information to them.
Uniform distribution	Pass out uniforms to workforce members (volunteers and others) at a uniform distribution facility.
Media support	Provide support to Japanese and foreign media covering the games at venues, the Press Center, and other locations.
Language services	Provide communication support to those affiliated with the games, including athletes, the media, and foreign dignitaries.
Support for teams	Support the teams that come from around the world. Start preparations prior to the teams entering the Olympic Village to facilitate a comfortable stay.
Logistics support	Support the management and organization of goods brought to competition venues, the Olympic Village, etc.

Note. The table content of job descriptions and specifications came from the publicly available volunteer strategy provided by Tokyo Metropolitan Government and Tokyo Organizing Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games 2020.

Training

Three different types of training will be provided to the Tokyo 2020 volunteers: standardized, leadership, and specialized training.

Standardized training

Standardized training familiarizes both games and city volunteers with the basic knowledge required for their service. The training will be conducted in three different formats: in-person, group training, and e-learning. The content and details of training manuals and sessions will be developed and determined by the central governing bodies of the Olympic Games and relevant organizations.

Leadership training

The leadership training aims to prepare volunteers to take a leadership role for other volunteers. The leadership training manual will incorporate lessons learned from hosting major events, such as the Tokyo Marathon.

Specialized training

In combination with standardized and leadership training programs, specialized training is designed to provide individual volunteers with customized training to acquire information and skills for their respective specialized jobs.

Case Problems

The Olympic Committee has approached you as an event volunteer program director to develop a plan for recruiting volunteers in accord with the Olympic vision of “Unity in Diversity.” The committee is interested in how to encourage people with diverse backgrounds to volunteer for the games. Particularly, they aim to achieve two specific goals: 1) enlist first-time volunteers and 2) reach out to groups, such as seniors or new immigrants, who have been largely neglected as potential volunteers.

1. Match three target volunteer groups on the left with a volunteering program you would find appropriate for the needs of each group.

1. Volunteers with disabilities

- The volunteer committee coordinates with the central government, corporate sponsors, and other invested organizations in the design of volunteering programs. The needs for this group to volunteer are determined and communicated to stakeholders so volunteers can be unburdened of their daily responsibilities and can engage in volunteering at flexible hours.

2. Grade, high school, college students

- The program accommodates the needs of this group in the recruitment, training, and placement process. Other volunteers are educated about how to work with this group. Training methods and materials may be modified for this group so they can comfortably acquire required information and skills.

3. Working adults

- They are encouraged to participate in volunteering programs through club activities. The tests will be rescheduled for dates after the games. In case parental supervision is needed, parents are consulted about the nature of volunteering with which they are engaged. They are welcome to participate together.

2. Below are some constraints that keep people from volunteering for the games. Match the constraints with solutions that the committee recommends.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. I have no time to volunteer. | • Share compliments from the participants and attendees about volunteers and recognize their contributions publicly. |
| 2. I want to volunteer, but I do not know how to begin. | • Disseminate recruitment programs via multiple channels and provide simple application process online and offline. |
| 3. I do not feel I am making any impact as a volunteer. | • Provide flexible volunteer schedule options that allow for work-life balance. Pick-up and drop-off services are provided by running a shuttle bus in the area. |
| 4. I have no other people to volunteer with me. | • Create a group volunteer program and promote opportunities for social interactions via volunteering. |

Specific Questions/Choices

- 1) Prior to which of the following jobs should the volunteer supervisor seek legal advice?
 - a) Estimating the number of volunteers needed
 - b) Creating job descriptions
 - c) Conducting performance evaluations
 - d) Engaging in retention activities
 - e) Dismissing disorderly volunteers preemptively
- 2) What would be the positive indications of a post-event legacy from the volunteering program? Select all that apply.
 - a) Carry volunteering spirits over into a broader community
 - b) Create the database to manage and contact volunteers for future events
 - c) Looking for a job in the industry relevant to their volunteer experience
 - d) Volunteer again only if family and work responsibilities are not affected
 - e) Encourage members from diverse social backgrounds to volunteer
- 3) Select all that the volunteer director should consider in designing the qualities of volunteers for a sport game venue
 - a) High level of knowledge of the game
 - b) Previous volunteer experience
 - c) Knowledge of local transportation system
 - d) Length of local residency
 - e) Ability to speak foreign languages
- 4) As a game volunteer leader, you are asked to determine how many volunteers are needed at the venue in which you are in charge for tomorrow and to report the number back to the volunteer committee. You are also informed that based on the number of advance tickets sold, your venue will be filled with half of yesterday's audience for tomorrow. Yesterday, the venue was 60% full to the maximum capacity. The venue can hold a maximum of 500 people. You know that in the venue policy, for every 25 spectators, there will be two volunteers on duty.
 - a) 7 volunteers
 - b) 5 volunteers
 - c) 6 volunteers
 - d) 3 volunteers

5) According to the literature on volunteers for a major sport game, seven benefit categories were identified that volunteers experienced from participating in a major sport event (Doherty, 2009; Kim et al., 2018). Match each benefit category on the left with corresponding items (two items per benefit) on the right.

1. Community contribution
2. Skill enrichment
3. Being part of the game
4. Extrinsic rewards
5. Positive memories
6. Social development

1. Giving something back to community
2. Watching sport events while on volunteer duty
3. Gaining unique experiences
4. Games volunteer uniforms
5. Acquired practical skills
6. Helping the community succeed
7. Experience the organization of running a sport event
8. Meeting different people
9. Working together with other volunteers
10. My skills are being utilized
11. Aiding athletes to perform
12. Food and souvenirs

Teaching Note/Answers

Question 1. Answer: e	Students understand the legal implications of volunteer management.
Question 2. Answer: a, b, c, and e	Students understand the positive benefits of the volunteer program legacy.
Question 3. Answer: a, b, c, and e	Students consider the qualities of a volunteer needed for a particular job when designing a volunteer program.
Question 4. Answer: c	Students compute the number of volunteers needed based on the data and the situational requirement. $500 \times 60\% = 300$ at the venue yesterday. For tomorrow, $300/2 = 150$ will be at the venue. So, $150/25 =$ a total of 6 volunteers will be needed at the venue for tomorrow.
Question 5. Answer: Benefit Category 1. Community contribution 2. Skill enrichment 3. Being part of the game 4. Extrinsic rewards 5. Positive memories 6. Social development Benefit Items 1. Giving something back to community 1. Helping the community succeed 2. My skills are being utilized 2. Acquired practical skills 3. Watching sport events while on volunteer duty 3. Aiding athletes to perform 4. Games volunteer uniforms 4. Food and souvenirs 5. Experience the organization of running a sport event 5. Gaining unique experience 6. Meeting different people 6. Working together with other volunteers	Students match the six benefit categories of a volunteer program with its corresponding items that belong to each category.

Case study

<p>Question 1.</p> <p>Answer: 1 -b, 2-c, 3-a</p> <p>1. Volunteers with disabilities (TMG & TOCOPG, 2016)</p> <p>The program accommodates the needs of volunteers with disabilities in the recruitment, training, and placement process. Other able volunteers are educated about how to work with people with disabilities. Training methods and materials are modified for volunteers with disabilities so they can comfortably acquire the required information and skills.</p> <p>2. Grade, high school, college students (TMG & TOCOPG, 2016)</p> <p>Students are encouraged to participate in volunteering programs through school programs and club activities. The tests will be rescheduled for dates after the games. In case parental supervision is needed for grade students, parents are consulted about the nature of volunteering with which students are engaged. They are welcomed to participate together.</p> <p>3. Working adults (TMG & TOCOPG, 2016)</p> <p>The organizers in charge of the volunteer program coordinate with the central government, corporate sponsors, and other invested organizations to design volunteering programs specifically for working adults. The needs for this group to volunteer are determined and communicated to stakeholders so the volunteers can be unburdened of their workplace responsibilities and can engage in volunteering after work.</p>	<p>Students create volunteer programs customized for the needs of different social groups.</p>
<p>Question 2.</p> <p>1. I have no time to volunteer.</p> <p>2. I want to volunteer, but I do not know how to begin.</p> <p>3. I do not feel I am making any impact as a volunteer.</p>	<p>Students produce solutions for the constraints of a volunteer program.</p>

<p>4. I have no other people to volunteer with me.</p> <p>1. Provide flexible volunteer schedule options that allow for work-life balance. Pick-up and drop-off services are provided by running a shuttle bus in the area.</p> <p>2. Disseminate recruitment programs via multiple channels and provide simple application process online and offline.</p> <p>3. Share compliments from the participants and attendees about volunteers and recognize their contributions publicly.</p> <p>4. Create a group volunteer program and promote opportunities for social interactions via volunteering.</p>	
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