

NPO Human Resource Structure

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NPO's Human Resource Structure

According to Ahmed (2013), “The common HRM functions include human resource planning, employee selection, performance evaluation, compensation, training and development, job classification, and collective bargaining.” (p.133). For a NPO to work effectively and efficiently, their human resource management (HRM) department should be working smoothly.

Policies, Procedures & Regulations

The policies, procedures, and regulations a NPO has in place will ultimately help the organization moving forward. As Ahmed (2013) points out, “...non-profits also need to have some processes and policies in place to work with volunteers.” (140). For my NPO of choice: RGV (Rio Grande Valley) Helping Hands, I decided to use my background knowledge on them (as a previous volunteer) and a phone interview with their secretary from November 25, 2020 to have a concise understanding of their human resource operations. This all volunteer organization serves South Texas (known as the Rio Grande Valley) and while they are not a large organization by any means, the efforts of their four-member unpaid governing board does make an impact in helping their community. This by helping build houses for special needs people and by participating in food bank drives.

This organization's primary means of income is a holiday themed haunted attraction, which operates on major holidays and then for two months in the Fall. In addition to that, some of the highlights from my interview with Secretary Kimberly Stuart-Serna regarding policies and procedures for the NPO are as follow:

1. **Reporting to Work-** All volunteers should report to the event an hour before the start time (which varies by date) by ‘checking in’ with volunteer manager.

2. **Safety/ Security-** All volunteers will go through a background check before being able to participate on any of the NPO operations. Volunteers are advised that security patrol courtesy of the city police department will be on duty on all events. Volunteers should report incidents to their volunteer manager, not directly to police/ patrol officer unless is a major emergency (these are explained to them during orientation and training).
3. **Nightly/ Daily Procedures-** It will be ultimately the decision of the volunteer and operation managers to switch around locations for volunteers or sets/ props (haunted attraction). Regarding operations, volunteers are advised to wear comfortable clothing when working on different projects and assignments.
4. **Volunteers Code of Conduct-** The following are banned from all NPO operations: smoking of any kind (including vaping), use of drugs and alcohol on premises and before the events (police department conducts random testing of volunteers). Because of the nature of the haunted attraction fundraising aspect of the NPO and the general liability insurance to third parties the NPO carries, there are important items to consider. Volunteers are specifically told that customers will not be allowed in the attraction without signing a waiver; this waiver allows the actors/ volunteers to touch the customers in an appropriate way and if not signed will then cause issues should an insurance claim occur. In addition, all interactions during the haunted attraction are recorded, again for insurance purposes. Finally, for all NPO operations, volunteers are reminded that harassment in any form including sexual harassment is not tolerated under any circumstances and just as any other violation of the code of conduct are reasons for dismissal or even further legal action from NPO.

5. **Additional Information-** The NPO must follow the guidelines set forth by the government and IRS through which they use form 990 to report their yearly activities or risk losing their tax-exempt status. They are also required to keep their general liability insurance to third parties during operations hours, which can be set per days used or per year. In addition, it was explained that given the nature of the governing board, they are all responsible for any financial mishaps within the NPO. Volunteers are also explained about the process to follow for dismissal and the warning system before they are formally dismissed. Finally, it was stated that volunteers have certain rights regarding whistleblower protections, complaints and grievances, which are explained after they pass background check and are ready to report to the NPO's activities (K. Stuart-Serna, personal communication, November 25, 2020).

Staff Structure

For the NPO staff structure, it follows the same format as described on the website <http://open990.org> and on the personal communication, except with a few added double duties/responsibilities since they are such as small enterprise. The president serves as the event director (for all events), the vice-president serves as the operations manager (for all operations), the treasurer (for all activities- box office manager for haunted attraction), the secretary serves as the volunteer manager (for all events or activities). It is important to note that all volunteers report to the secretary since she also serves as volunteer manager; she in turn has developed a system to help volunteers follow an 'organizational ladder,' through which different volunteers report to team leaders. Finally, the local police department has engaged in a partnership with the NPO to have their own police force as volunteers; the police department always provides security patrols no matter the community activity the NPO is engaged in.

Retention & Recruitment Programs

Per their website (<http://rgvhelpinghands.com/>), the phone interview (K. Stuart-Serna, personal communication, November 25, 2020), and the information on the website <http://tolucaranch.com>, the NPO has implemented different programs and opportunities for the community to become volunteers in the organization than range from simply stating they will make a difference in their community (altruism) by volunteering to participating in the haunted attraction. Among others, the NPO offers community hours for high school students and coursework credit for local community colleges. The haunted attraction works as a recruitment activity all in itself since most of the volunteers for the NPO first serve at the haunted attraction and then continue to work with the other activities. It is also important to note that in order to serve at the attraction, volunteers are asked to also serve some hours at the other activities or else they will not be able to be considered for the attraction volunteer pool anymore. Recruitment programs are conducted throughout the local school districts/ colleges and in different media (news, social media platforms, etc.). Finally, there are some pictures that the volunteer manager has included on the websites (for organization and for haunted attraction) to show different volunteers in action; the secretary stated this has also helped with recruitment efforts.

Incentives & Training

Based on information on the personal communication and on their Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/rgvhelpinghands>), I was informed that among the incentives the NPO offers, the biggest and most popular one is participating in the haunted attraction. Being able to participate at the attraction usually brings in plenty of volunteers with a waitlist that spans over 100-200 volunteers per year; all of the approved volunteers as stated before will also participate in other NPO activities or otherwise they will not be considered again. All volunteers

receive training/ orientation when first becoming active volunteers within the organization. Such trainings include different lessons on how to be a good performer/ actor (for haunted attraction) and on how to work with different types of people and on home building (for other activities) as well as handbook orientation.

Strengths & Weaknesses (Conclusion)

I think that for the most part, this NPO has a strong system to manage their volunteers. I believe they have a masterful way of encouraging people to volunteer with the organization (especially those like myself who love Halloween or horror movies). They have a balanced way to tend to both their year-round fundraiser activities (haunted attraction) and to their multiple engagements (building houses, improving on them, food bank participation, etc.). The NPO does very well retaining volunteers and having a wide pool for future volunteer applicants. I think if anything, their weakness would be that they do not have much information on their website regarding their handbook and some other policies and procedures. I believe having clear understanding of such may help future volunteers. Although in all honesty, it seems even with that, they do not have issues achieving high levels of engagement with their volunteers. They also seem to treat them as paid employees, which can only help.

References

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