

The ABC's of Event Planning

Event

Gatekeepers'

Guide

"Thanks to gatekeepers and volunteers like you,
worthy causes are supported, important events take place,
our communities are strengthened, and our lives are enriched.

We thank you for caring...and doing!"

Brought to you in part by:

Michigan Festivals & Events Association

Central Michigan University

Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs

National Endowment for the Arts



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Crackin' the EGG...

The ABC's of Event Planning Event Gatekeepers' Guide (The EGG)

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The Event Gatekeepers' Guide - a.k.a. The EGG

“IDEAS SHARED....VISIONS FORMED, A NEW LEVEL...”

There's a special skill to hosting an event...planning, training, volunteers, establishing committees, decorating, food prep, setting up entertainment—the list is endless! And, when the event is a community-sized celebration—that's where Michigan Festivals & Events Association (MFEA) comes in!

Over the past 20 years, serving as Executive Director of MFEA I have seen the need for an educational manual for our community volunteers/gatekeepers' serving to make their event the best ever. After all, we simply would not have a community festival/celebration if it were not for the gatekeepers. Finally, thanks to a grant from Michigan Council for Arts & Cultural Affairs (MCACA) and National Endowment for the Arts—our opportunity has been realized as we introduce you to *The Event Gatekeepers' Guide*, better known as *The EGG*.

What I thought would be a dozen chapters, perhaps a baker's dozen, *The EGG* continues to expand as many authors and event planners from the industry have come forward to assist in writing chapters and sharing their expertise and experiences. I envision *The EGG* to be a “work in progress” document for quite some time. Trends in the event industry are changing rapidly—allowing for continuous updates as well as true-to-life experiences for those of you working in the trenches of your event. Today's technology will allow *The EGG* to be accessible from the MFEA website, allowing up-to-date changes to reflect the latest trends and opportunities. In essence: What's New—What's HOT! HOT! HOT!

Events have changed the world and, in fact our lives. The celebrations have left treasures of memorable moments as we celebrate our history, heritage, culture, harvest and vast waterways, truly Michigan's four seasons in celebration! And now, we can extend the event experiences for our audience and sponsors with the increasing amount of content being made available to mobile phones and who knows what other technological must-haves in the future!

We hope you will enjoy *The EGG*—quoted as being “eggcellent”. Use it if you are feeling “a bit scrambled” at times in planning your event. And please, don't let a “hard egg” interrupt your creative mind set. Here's to serving your community and guests, the best on the menu of hospitality and fun, while providing a very positive economic impact to your community and state!

Party On ~ MI Friends!

Sue Bila, CFEE

Executive Director

Note: A special invite, please contact the MFEA office if you would like to share in the future content of *The EGG*.



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SO YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE A FESTIVAL PLANNING STEPS

by Sue Bila, CFEE, MFEA Executive Director

DATES

Commit publicly up to three years in advance or establish annual date and hours of operation.

THEME

Select your theme – This may also reflect upon your selection of date(s).

BUDGET

Obtain written quotes from all suppliers (e.g. Printing, entertainment, advertising, supplies, etc.).

ACTIVITIES

Select activities that your budget can substantiate. Examples: parade, showcase, dance, honors night, hometown night, queen pageant, coronation ball, press night, special events (i.e. Tug-of-war, pie eating contest, etc.)

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

- Job descriptions and requirements
- Volunteer bank
- Established workers list

OBTAINING ALL CONTRACTS AND PERMITS

Examples:

- Talent
- Facilities
- Insurance
- Liquor license
- Sign permits
- City/government permits
- Security

SPONSORS

“Share the Budget and Promote Jointly Your Event”. Request sponsor to provide written proposal or submit a written proposal to them.

MARKETING – “GETTING THEM THERE”

Develop marketing plan and check your resources (e.g. Chamber of Commerce, city officials, community groups, locals and state travel and tourism bureaus and Michigan Festivals and Events Association.

Advertising:

- Obtain mailing lists
- Select radio time buys
- Select newspaper ad schedule
- Select billboard locations and time frames
- Select television time buys
- Select trade papers or magazines
- Send event information to free listings
- Your MFEA membership will list your event in 500,000 4-color brochures

Public Relations:

- Press night
- Special planned events
- Press releases
- Schedule complimentary pass list
- Public appearances (e.g. rotary meetings, radio and television interviews)

Group Sales:

- Direct Mail
- Brochures
- Group Planner
- Advance Sales
- Travel Shows
- Follow-ups

Sales Promotion:

- Travel Shows
- Radio give-a-ways
- “Ask Me” program or awareness program
- Souvenirs

ON SITE LOGISTICS – “PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS”

- Develop check off list of requirements
- Develop set-up week schedule
- Develop emergency plan

PRESENTING “YOUR FESTIVAL/EVENT”

- Daily administrative meetings
- Daily check-of list
- Banking
- Inventory control – suppliers
- Concessions
- Continuous public relations

WRAP UP – EVALUATION – “LET’S GET CRITICAL”

- Review demographics
- Review ticket sales
- Critique workers performances
- \$/sense: were they wisely spent?
- Future planning

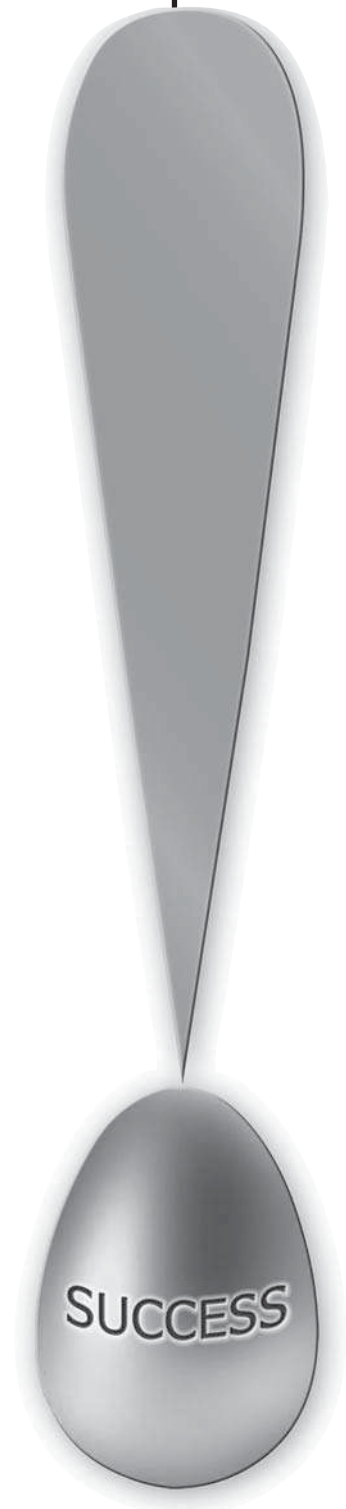
Celebrate! You’ve done a great job. Thank your volunteers and sponsors!



Michigan Festivals & Events Association (MFEA) began in 1992 under its founding Executive Director, Sue Bila. In 1994, under Sue’s leadership, MFEA moved quickly to establish a companion Educational Foundation to encourage corporate and individual sponsorships. Sue currently holds a Certified Festival Event Executive (CFEE) title issued by the International Festivals & Events Association and Purdue University. The Association began with 40 members and has grown to become the largest State Association in the nation for festivals and events. Under MFEA, she has directed the Opening Ceremonies and Torch Lighting of the State Games. She directed the Welcome Fest Weekends at the Clare Welcome Center and has served as the Community Coordinator for the Tree of Hope which proudly served at the nation’s holiday tree in Washington, D.C. Sue served on the Saginaw County Fair Blue Ribbon Committee and was instrumental in the success of its transition, relocation from Saginaw to Chesaning, and the unique programming for special events within the Saginaw County Agricultural Society.

Chapter 1

VOLUNTEERS

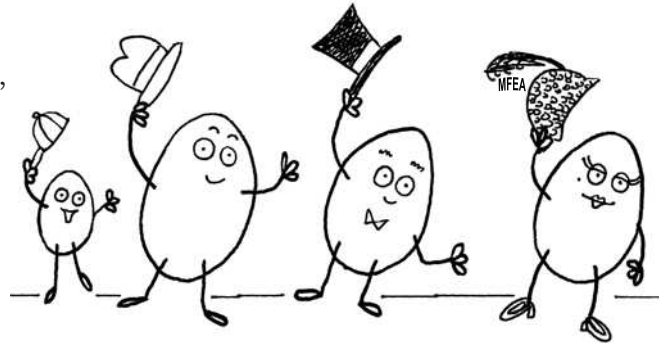


Volunteer Management

Managing an Unpaid Staff Who You Treat like Employees

by Dr. Tim Otteman, Ed.D., Assistant Professor of Department of Recreation, Parks and Leisure Services Administration, Central Michigan University

Volunteers are the lifeblood of any successful festival or special event. From 4th of July parades to annual summer festivals to ethnic and cultural celebrations, volunteers are truly the cogs and gears that make the total event “machine” function. In most cases, volunteers not only serve as the front line service providers at your event - they are the face of your entire organization! These invaluable “employees” are the people that your “customers” remember. Customers remember the person who sold them merchandise, served their food or helped them park - they remember the “service” they received from people who were representing your festival or event as the direct link to your consumer - THE VOLUNTEER!



“Thanks volunteers. We couldn’t do it without you.”

The following article will provide, in “top ten list” format, helpful hints in dealing with volunteers. This list has been created through numerous years of festival and event experiences, in addition to “real life” volunteer stories from three Michigan-specific special events that I have been directly involved with Special Olympics Michigan’s State Summer Games, the Gus Macker 3-on-3 Basketball Festival, and the Amy Otteman Memorial Golf Classic.

1. ENLIST GOOD PEOPLE

In order for you to secure a quality pool of volunteers, you must have a volunteer recruitment plan that is both specific to your event and to the volunteer task. While not everyone who volunteers at a basketball festival has to be an expert in the sport of basketball, in some volunteer roles, such a referee or scorekeeper, detailed basketball knowledge is critical. You must make a conscious effort to attempt to match your volunteer positions with individuals that have the complimentary skill set for that job. At the Amy Otteman Memorial Classic, a golf tournament created to raise money for the Central Michigan Community Hospital, all of the volunteers who had any responsibility for collecting, counting or securing money were recruited from a group of retired accountants from a manufacturing company.

In addition to having a defined recruitment plan, you should also have a detailed training program. This training should highlight your overall festival or event, but also give step-by-step instructions of what is expected for each volunteer position.

It is extremely important that all volunteers have an overall understanding of your event. The reason that this is so critical is because they will be asked

random questions by your festival goers or event attendees. They will need to know things like where restrooms are located, activity costs, types of food vendors, etc. At the 2009 Gus Macker Basketball Festival in Mt. Pleasant, thirty-eight undergraduate event management students at Central Michigan University served as the event organizers and day-of volunteers. For those that served as “court captains” or the individuals responsible for all functions at a competitive court, they were trained (via an academic, two credit course entitled “The Organization and Administration of Basketball Festivals”) in Gus Macker history, event marketing and sponsorship, the rules of the game, policies specific to the age group on their court, check-in procedures, bracket maintenance, etc.

Lastly, the key to any successful volunteer recruitment plan is a retention program to keep quality volunteers. While I will detail some retention techniques later in this article, it is important to understand that in order to determine volunteer success (or failure!) you must have a way in which to accurately evaluate them. This evaluation can happen through any variety of avenues, such as committee head observation, attendee comment cards or post-event surveys.

2. DELEGATE!

Probably the biggest error all festival and event directors make is to not delegate enough. We get involved because of an organizational expertise or a passion for the event, and we have a hard time letting go of our “baby.” But in order for any event to be truly successful, you must not only secure volunteers with a skill set appropriate to the job, but you must allow them to do the job you recruited them for. Don’t micromanage them! You know they are qualified for the job or you wouldn’t have wanted them in the first place. The training that you have given them about the event and their specific job has provided them with everything they need to be successful, but make sure that you don’t create any “delegation barriers” that may inhibit them. Examples of these type of barriers would be a lack of knowledge about the specific job (assigning a volunteer the job of food concessionaire when they have no experience with the food preparation or delivery) or working with others that they have challenges with (having a person who dislikes children volunteer with a youth group).

One incredible offshoot of successful delegation is the quality experience you can provide to the volunteer. There is no better way to make volunteers happy than to give them an experience that is a good use of their valuable time, an experience that utilizes their talents and ensures that they helped “make a difference.” If you have provided those components, you have created the perfect scenario - lifetime volunteers who will tell others about their wonderful experience.

3. DON’T REINVENT THE WHEEL

There are times when we all get infatuated with the newest, biggest and fastest innovation. Many of us can remember how we went from the record player to the eight track tape to the cassette to the CD. But not all changes are necessary and, in some cases, can even be detrimental. While phone calls were replaced by

e-mails and those have now been replaced by texts and tweets, are they really better than a face-to-face conversation? The point is to resist making changes if changes are not really needed.

The current way you deal with volunteers may be the best way for your specific event. If it is, and you will know based on volunteers not only repeatedly coming back, but also helping to recruit others, then don't change just because you think you need to "keep up with the Jones."

Don't just pay attention to what other festivals and events are doing (although it is always good to see what is working in other, similar events), but compare procedures with results. If you are retaining quality volunteers and you are meeting or exceeding festival and event goals then stay the track and keep doing what you have (although it is always good to see what is working with other, similar events), but rather compare procedures with results at your own event. If you are retaining quality volunteers and you are meeting or exceeding festival and event goals, then stay on track and keep doing what you have been doing in the past. Consistency can be a great ally and can even create a dynamic that becomes a valued "tradition." At the Special Olympics Michigan State Summer Games, the "Brown Helmet Award" has become an invaluable tradition and it actually recognizes the worst volunteer "mistake" of the year. While this may seem strange, this award (an actual World War II army helmet) serves two important purposes - it creates a bonding experience among volunteers through acknowledging the error by making light of it, and it makes each volunteer work a little harder next year as they strive not to "win" the award.

The biggest reason to not "reinvent the wheel" is the simple fact that we as human beings do not adjust well to change. Don't get me wrong, human beings are extremely resilient and have historically proven that we can adapt to adversity.

Although in most cases we can adapt, we are not always very happy about it. And there is nothing worse than a disgruntled volunteer who is upset because you changed something that has "worked for the last fifteen years." Modify or alter something if the conditions warrant a change, but don't just change for the sake of changing.

4. BE CREATIVE AND INNOVATIVE

At times this may be the case, but sometimes there is a better way. Maybe the way you have been dealing with volunteers has become obsolete and you need to upgrade your approach. The concept is simple: interesting = attentiveness. You have to keep volunteers engaged to keep them motivated and productive. It might be something as easy as a new way for them to register to volunteer (an online option vs. a paper form) or a unique way to thank them for their valuable time (a special form of acknowledgement for milestone years of involvement).

One thing to keep in mind is the major differences in volunteer pools. Consider college students and senior citizens. You have to look at each group of volunteers

and determine their “hot button” or motivational key. For example, today’s college student is technologically savvy and lives for “free stuff” because of a disposable income. Conversely, seniors, while also on a limited income, embrace building and maintaining relationships and have a tremendous desire to be valued. You can reach both types of volunteers in different ways. Recruit college student volunteers with a free T-shirt and daily giveaways for volunteers who work an eight hour shift and retain senior volunteers by taking the time to greet, welcome and speak with each volunteer and write them a hand-written note after the event. With both examples, you are showing you care about them as an individual and have made a conscious effort to recognize and value their involvement.

5. RECOGNIZE QUALITY WORK

This is probably the biggest “no-brainer” concept of this top ten list - SAY THANK YOU! It seems like common sense, but you would be amazed at the number of times that people in our industry don’t take the time to thank their valuable volunteers.

As previously mentioned, the key to this concept is to say thank you in a way that is valuable to each volunteer. That is only possible if you and your committee members take the time to get to know your volunteers and their all-important “hot button.” Some people need to be publicly acknowledged by having their name appear in the newspaper or in an event publication. Some want a tangible gift. Others literally may need a hand shake, a pat on the back or even a hug. The best way may be to create a recognition program that provides a common “something” for all volunteers (such as a certificate of achievement or a T-shirt) with the flexibility for personal touches to individuals.

For example, at the Amy Otteman Memorial Classic, each and every volunteer received the same “goodie bag” as the participating golfers (an event-specific gift like a golf towel, mug or shirt; drink tickets for lunch; sunscreen; lip balm and a randomly selected door prize). Every event volunteer was also personally handed additional drink tickets by a committee member during the course of the event, were publicly thanked during the post-golf banquet and were eligible for induction into the “Circle of Friends,” a Hall of Fame displayed in the registration area and banquet room recognizing outstanding contributions to the success of the event.

6. ASK FOR HELP

Even though we as festival and event coordinators are often looked at for guidance as the ultimate “experts,” that is not always the case. In many instances we have become the “leaders” because of the way we recruit, motivate, mesh and retain people as opposed to our knowledge of the event industry.

The concept is very simple - **IT’S NOT WHAT YOU KNOW, IT’S WHO YOU KNOW!** You don’t have to know everything about everything, but you do have

to surround yourself with “experts” in the key areas of your event. Maybe the retired chief of police (who was your neighbor) in your community becomes the head of your security committee or your favorite bus driver from high school is the chair of the transportation committee.

You will have the ability to recruit these individuals because of a prior or current relationship with them. These relationships do not have to be of the “best friend” variety, but just enough to open the door for a conversation. It is this “ice breaker” that allows you an entry to an expert that can help your event. Once the door is open, you can sell them on their involvement through whatever “hot button” you have determined will be of value to them. This motivation to be involved will be varied for every individual, but could be things like giving back to the community, an interest in a charity that you support or involvement with a specific civic organization. There is no better way to make people feel important and valued than to ask for their opinion or their help – take advantage of this opportunity.

7. FIND A WAY TO COMMUNICATE

We can all become better communicators, and one of the ways we can improve is to understand how communication actually happens. Most of us understand that communication happens between a sender (the person trying to communicate) and a receiver (the person the sender is trying to communicate with). And the “thing” that is trying to be communicated is called the message.

But the other components of the communication model are more detailed and take a little more time to fully absorb. First, is a concept called *encoding*. Encoding is the effort of the sender to “tailor” the message for a specific receiver. For example as an event director with a varied group of volunteers, I would not deliver a message the same way to a group of high school juniors as I would to a group of retired teachers. The key to encoding is understanding the dynamics of the receiver(s). In the previous example, you should make sure that you speak in language appropriate to each group (such as the acronym BFF for the high schooler, while actually saying “best friends forever” with the retiree) and use examples that would make sense to each of those generations (talking about Brady Bunch as a television show for the retired teacher as opposed to American Idol for the high schooler).

The next critical component to grasp is the *channel*. The channel is the mechanism you utilize to deliver the message. There are countless “vehicles” to get the message to your receiver including face-to-face conversation, hand-written notes, phone conversations, staff meetings, e-mail, volunteer trainings, texts, etc. The key is to pick the right one for the individual volunteer or volunteer group. The best way to communicate with high school students is probably via e-mail or text because they are never without the latest technology. And it might be better to hold an orientation meeting or send a letter to retired teachers as they have more disposable time and are acclimated to receiving important information via “snail mail.”

Another important concept to successful communication is the value of *feedback*. Gathering information from receivers on whether or not the message was effectively received and retained is vitally important to not only that one “conversation” but how you “tweak” and improve future communications. Volunteers are great sources of knowledge about how the event ran and they are usually more than willing to share their thoughts if asked. They have great insights as to why something worked and what to emphasize as you move forward, in addition to aspects that were ineffective and need to be altered or abandoned in the future.

Lastly, make sure you watch out for *noise*. Noise is anything that may disrupt the message from getting to the receiver. It may be actual noise like cars going by on a nearby street as you do a site visit or the fan in the room where you are conducting a volunteer training. It also may be that your volunteers are not focused due to them thinking about a problem at work or a fight with their significant other. In order to combat “noise,” try to make meetings as short as possible, eliminate any unnecessary distractions and deliver your “message” in short, easily understandable statements.

As communicators, we will never be perfect nor should we subscribe to be, but we should constantly strive to be better and more efficient in the way we communicate with our volunteers. We have to remember that they are giving us their valuable time. And if we want them to continue to do so, we need to provide them with the best possible experience. Wise choices with encoding, the selection of proper channels, listening to feedback and the elimination of noise will help you to ensure that experience.

8. BE A DUCK

Picture a duck on a pond with the wind blowing thirty miles an hour in a cold, steady rain. The duck, although the weather conditions are less than ideal, appears to be effortlessly floating across the surface of the pond. In reality, under the surface of the water the duck is furiously paddling its feet in order to stay on track in the face of the terrible conditions.

This is how you must act and respond in front of your volunteers. Even though you are in the middle of “normal” event chaos, you must appear calm and in control of all situations. Your volunteers will follow your lead. If you are in control of the situation and reasonably reacting to the “storm” of the moment, others around you will react in a similar manner. If you are “flipping out,” the same will be true with your volunteers - they will become stressed and their performance will suffer.

The other part of this duck analogy is how the water beads up and runs off the duck’s back no matter how hard it may be raining. This is also something that you should strive for - having the ability to let criticism or negativity roll off your

back and not affect your ability to manage your festival or event. As you are well aware, you *will* receive negative comments or criticisms from volunteers. Please take the time to put the complaint in perspective, consider the source of the criticism, assess the validity of the issue and solve the problem to the best of your ability. Keep in mind that your main responsibility is to the overall success of the event and don't let one incident bring you down or put a negative spin on a positive experience! Just remember, others are watching to see how you react.

9. UNDERSTAND STRESS

We all become stressed - it's human nature. In layman's terms, stress is the physiological response of the body to a demand that has been placed on it. So, when your hands sweat on a first date or you blank out on a test question even though you studied, that is your body's response to the "demands" of nervousness, the unknown, pressure or test anxiety. This type of stress is called "bad stress" or *distress*. The demand that is being placed on you is causing a decrease in your performance, but there is also "good stress," called *eustress*. In the case of eustress, performance improves as the result of the demand, such as the athlete who wants to take the last shot with the clock winding down or the executive who waits until the last minute with a proposal because he/she believes they work better under pressure.

The stress of dealing with volunteers can create both distress and eustress. Volunteers who are late, don't show up, complain and don't do the job as they have been trained can cause us to become stressed. This stress usually manifests itself in the form of a headache, upset stomach, muscle tension, difficulty sleeping and general irritability, not the perfect scenario for a festival and event director during the week of an event.

But knowing what could happen may be the key to managing this type of stress. All festival and event directors should subscribe to "Murphy's Law." The wise Mr. Murphy simply said, "Whatever can go wrong, will go wrong." If we understand that volunteers may be late, not show up, complain and not perform, then we can put procedures in place to handle these situations. If a plan exists, we can simply *proactively* enact the plan without reacting to the individual situation, thus reducing or eliminating the stress.

We are actually very good at this type of stress maintenance regarding risk management. We determine the risk, develop a method to reduce the risk and have procedures in place to deal with an incident in case something occurs. If we do the same thing in dealing with our human (as opposed to physical) resources, we will have a more productive and happier volunteer team.

10. BE PASSIONATE

This last topic the one that is easiest to lose sight of. As festival and event directors, we must stay passionate about the events we are involved with. It

is extremely hard to stay on task and be productive if we are not excited about going to work.

You constantly have to find new ways to keep yourself, your staff and your volunteers motivated. The reason that your motivational level is critical is that, as previously mentioned, people will follow your lead. It goes back to the fourth “top ten” hint of this article - be creative and innovative. It may be as simple as adding a new facet to your event or honoring a tradition and milestone to “recharge your batteries” and reenergize you.

Two years before ending the Amy Otteman Memorial Classic, we announced to past participants and sponsors that the last event would be in 2009. This simple announcement, delivered at the banquet in 2007 via e-mail to past captains and through the 2008 and 2009 registration mailings, totally rejuvenated not only the event committee, but the players, sponsors and volunteers of the event.

The event became completely filled months ahead of time, and new ancillary activities were added to create new funding streams, but also to capture the camaraderie and excitement of the last two opportunities to be involved with this event. Two of these extra activities were the *Fault the Family Dunk Tank Revenge* where players, sponsors and volunteers paid a small fee to dunk the family-based event planners for ending the event and the *Pennies For Heaven* campaign where players each brought fifteen rolls of pennies commemorating fifteen years of the event. This campaign took on a life of its own as local businesses began competing against each other by collecting pennies from customers and staff resulting in over \$6,000!

It is activities like these that help you to remember why you are involved in the first place. We are not in this industry for the money or the prestige - we do it because we truly love the festival and event world and all the craziness that comes with it. Embrace that “craziness” and let it drive you.

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Additional Resources:

National Cherry Festival
Volunteer Ambassador Training Manual
(see Appendix)



Dr. Tim Otteman

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Volunteers Make It Happen!

by National Cherry Festival

The following is the orientation guide given to National Cherry Festival volunteer ambassadors.

INTRODUCTION

Congratulations! And thank you for joining us as a volunteer ambassador for the National Cherry Festival, and we are happy to have you as a member of the team! You are now a special part of this unique event rated as one of the country's Top Ten Festivals by *USA Today* and one of the top 100 events in North America. As a festival volunteer ambassador, YOU are the face of the festival!



The National Cherry Festival is Traverse City's chance to shine and show off our beautiful community. Our visitors come from the world over to experience this exciting festival celebrating the Cherry. Once they are home, and the excitement and taste of all those cherry delights have faded from memory, what do you think they will remember most? With your help, it will most certainly be the fun and flavor of the festival created by the special people who made it happen: the volunteer ambassadors who made their visit special.

Your dedication, commitment, and energy will have a direct impact on the success of this year's festival. Bring your energy, your enthusiasm, and your comfortable shoes as we strive to make this year the best ever for the National Cherry Festival!

We look forward to meeting and working with you in the weeks leading up to this fabulous event, and of course, during festival week. Welcome aboard.

VOLUNTEER AMBASSADORS COME IN ALL SHAPES AND SIZES

Volunteers come in different shapes and sizes and from many different backgrounds. Each one, regardless of age or background, has a special role to play and is an important part of the overall festival experience created for our visitors. From our youngest juniors to our eldest seniors, each of you are the face of the festival!



Most likely, you were selected to be a volunteer ambassador in one of these categories:

- Junior Ambassadors – ages 12 – 15.
- Intermediate Ambassadors – ages 16 – 20.
- Ambassador – 21 and older.
- Ambassador Internship Program – ages 18 – 25 working full time for two weeks and assigned to an Event Coordinator.
- Volunteer Teams – ages 12+: Groups of 5 or more from one organization or business working together as a team to support their community, and share pride in their affiliations and corporations.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES AS A FACE OF THE FESTIVAL AMBASSADOR



Remember, as a volunteer ambassador, you are the face of the festival!

Volunteer ambassadors are vital to entertaining the multitudes of visitors from around the world who attend our annual National Cherry Festival. Whether you are volunteering as an individual or as

a member of a team representing an organization, business, or civic group, your whole-hearted participation is crucial. You are representing the community, the festival, and your group. Nothing less than your best is expected.

Keep a positive, energetic, and customer-friendly attitude with fellow ambassadors and festival guests at all times during your volunteer assignment. Your energy, your enthusiasm, and your smile are what will be remembered by our visitors long after they return to their homes and regular lives. Let's give them an experience to fondly remember by being the best ambassadors ever.

MIND YOUR P'S

One of the best ways to ensure we are putting our best face forward as an ambassador is to remember the three P's:

- Pride
- Presence
- Passion

PRIDE

Show pride in our community and pride in ourselves.

- Our Traverse City community, the cherry industry, and ourselves, the dedicated citizenry, are all on display during the annual National Cherry Festival.
- For more than 81 years our city has come together to present an internationally acclaimed festival that draws huge crowds. Over 500,000 visitors see our

community annually during festival week. That takes a whole lot of work, time, and energy.

- Volunteers make the National Cherry Festival happen. Take pride in your efforts and those of the community. Be proud of yourself for your role in participating in the over 25,000 hours of volunteer work by hundreds of volunteers needed to make this festival happen. You deserve recognition for your commitment and dedication.
- Wear your pride proudly: SMILE!



PRESENCE

Presentation is important in showcasing our quality entertainment and activities throughout festival week. We are presenting the best we have to offer in wholesome family fun: pageantry and entertainment, games and contests, gourmet cherry creations, fantastic sporting events, award winning wines, and more.

Presence is the key to successful volunteering: Be here now. Leave your worries and other commitments behind during your volunteer duty assignment. Wear a smile, share your energy, and display enthusiasm for being part of this wonderful opportunity to serve as an Ambassador for your hometown and to the people of the international community. It certainly won't hurt to include volunteer time on your resume either!

PASSION

Cherries are our passion. Share your passion: for the cherry, for fun, family entertainment, fine summer days, for life! Be passionate. Be polite. Be friendly. Be helpful. Be happy.

VOLUNTEER DO'S AND DON'TS: IMPORTANT STUFF TO KNOW

As a volunteer ambassador, it is important for you to know the answers: to questions about the festival and to locations of certain services that our visitors may ask about. Some of the frequently asked questions you will want to have answers for are:

Ambassador Oasis: Just for ambassadors, there is a place for you to relax. Volunteers will welcome you and provide food and drinks to help you relax if you are taking a break from your work and are dressed in your ambassador shirt. Each day they put on a different theme for all ambassadors.

Emergency Services: There is an Emergency Station for first aid next to the Welcome Center. Emergency personnel and medical services are available at any

location. When there is an emergency situation, immediately Call 9-1-1 to report the emergency. Identify your location and discuss the type of emergency.



Lost Child Help: Time is of the essence when a parent reports a lost child. Immediately notify an event coordinator or anyone with a radio, get a description of the child and what they are wearing, share the information, and then escort the parents to the Welcome Center. If you observe a lost child in the Open Space, accompany the child to the Welcome Center. **Lost & Found:** Located at the Welcome Center in the Open Space.

Nearest Restrooms, Baby Changing Area & Food Booths: Know where the closest restrooms, baby changing area, and food booths are to the location where you are assigned.

Bike Corrals: Know the location of the bike corral located on the Open Space.

Welcome Center: Located prominently in the Open Space. Volunteers and guests are encouraged to take time to become informed about events, activities, and local information available at the Welcome Center.

Gold Pin Registration: Registration slips for gold pins are to be handed in at the Welcome Center.

Dogs OK? Dogs are not allowed on the Open Space. Leashed dogs are permitted to walk on the Tart Trail.

Kids Activities: Some of the kids activities are located at F&M Park, Horizon Mall, and the Open Space. The Program has the location of each event.

Cherry Cookbook Sales: *Cherry Creations – The Ultimate Cookbook* can be purchased at the festival and online at the National Cherry Festival website: www.cherryfestival.org.

NATIONAL CHERRY FESTIVAL FACTS:

- 2007 celebrates the 81st annual Festival
- Half a million visitors attend the Festival each year!
- Festival week includes over 150 events, 75% of which are free to visitors.
- The festival celebrates the cherry industry, promotes tourism, and has a large financial impact: Over \$15 million annually, the bulk of which benefits the local community.

CHERRY INDUSTRY TIDBITS: DID YOU KNOW?

Cherries have pleased the palates of food lovers for centuries. Their ruby-red color and tangy taste won cherries a place on the tables of Roman conquerors, Greek citizens, and Chinese noblemen. For history buffs, it's interesting to know that:

- Cherries were brought to America by ship with the early settlers in the 1600s!
- Cherry trees graced the gardens of early French settlers, in Midwestern settlements and cities such as Detroit, Vincennes, and others.



CHERRY INDUSTRY TIDBITS: DID YOU KNOW?

- Peter Dougherty, a Presbyterian missionary, planted cherry trees on Old Mission Peninsula (near Traverse City) in 1852. Much to the surprise of the other farmers and Indians who lived in the area, Dougherty's cherry trees flourished and soon other residents of the area planted trees.
- Modern day cherry production began in the mid-1800s. The first commercial tart cherry orchards in Michigan were planted in 1893 on Ridgewood Farm near the site of Dougherty's original planting. By the early 1900s, the tart cherry industry was firmly established in the state with orchards not only in the Traverse City area, but all along Lake Michigan from Benton Harbor to Elk Rapids.
- Traverse City Canning Company, the first cherry processing facility, was built just south of Traverse City, and the ruby-red fruit was soon shipped to Chicago, Detroit and Milwaukee.
- Michigan grows about 75 percent of the U.S. crop of tart cherries! On average, the United States produces more than 650 million pounds of tart and sweet cherries.

FESTIVAL DO'S:

- Dress appropriately throughout festival week. Wear your official ambassador shirt and name tag while working your volunteer shift.
- Call your assigned Event Coordinator prior to the festival just to check in.
- Leave your valuables and personal belongings elsewhere when reporting for your volunteer shift as there is no secured area to safeguard your camera, purse, wallet, etc.
- Be certain that you have transportation to and from the event you are working for your volunteer shift. There is no parking at the festival. Try parking at the Parking Deck which is located on Front and Park Streets.
- Be on time for your volunteer assignment. Check in with the Event Coordinator prior to beginning your shift. Be at the assigned location a few minutes prior to the start of your volunteer shift.
- Call the Event Coordinator immediately upon learning that you are unable to work your volunteer shift. If you sign up to work an event you are expected to work that event.

- Enjoy yourself and wear a smile!
- Be friendly, courteous, and helpful before, during and after your shift. Remember, as a volunteer ambassador, you are the face of the festival!
- Understand your assignment and be accountable: Know your volunteer responsibilities and perform them to the best of your ability.
- Be aware of any safety issues in the near vicinity to your work shift location.

FESTIVAL DO'S:

- Do drive carefully and courteously while operating festival vehicles as part of your work shift.
- Smoking and drinking of beverages is not permitted in festival vehicles. They are new and must be returned in original condition. Any dents, stains, etc. will have to be restored and must be paid for by the festival.
- Relax in the Ambassador Oasis: it is for your use while taking a break during your work shift.
- Wear your official ambassador shirt and name tag only while you are on duty. Do not wear your official uniform shirt or name tag while hanging out with other volunteers before or after your shift. This causes confusion for visitors and may give a wrong impression of the festival.
- Respect other volunteers during their working shift; do not congregate around a work location if you are not on duty there.
- Share your comments about the volunteer program with the festival office:
National Cherry Festival 109 Sixth Street, Traverse City, MI 49684.
Phone: 231/947-4230 Fax: 231/947-7435 www.cherryfestival.org E-mail:
Tammy@cherryfestival.org



FESTIVAL DON'TS:

- Don't use alcohol and/or drugs at the events while wearing festival attire. Consuming of alcoholic beverages while wearing the official red ambassador shirt and name tag or during a volunteer shift is not permitted. Anyone doing so will be escorted off the premises.
- Don't hesitate to ask for assistance when you need it.
- Don't give incorrect information. If you don't know the answer just say so, then be as helpful as you can be in directing the individual to someone who can be of assistance.

FINAL TIDBITS

Remember, you are a special part of this unique annual event.

As a volunteer or ambassador, you are the face of the festival. Your friendliness, helpful attitude, and cheerful smile are part of the experience that visitors will take home with them.

Be passionate. Be polite. Be friendly. Be helpful. Be happy. And most importantly, we thank you for your dedicated service. Volunteers make it happen. Have fun at the festival!

Get to Know Your Volunteers

by Commander Mike Smith,
Executive Director of Grand Haven Coast Guard Festival, Inc.

Volunteers walk through our doors, call us up, and sign up for “helping out” where needed all the time. But usually we are in such a crunch for people to help us do “the little stuff” that we often miss the talents and gifts of the volunteers we are surrounding ourselves with.

At the Union Rescue Mission, the nation’s largest homeless shelter in Skid Row in the heart of downtown Los Angeles, people from all walks of life enter with the hope of making a difference in the lives of the multitude of homeless who wander through the city streets. Some past practices have been to greet the volunteers and quickly sign them up to cut potatoes in the kitchen and then serve the meal to the 2,100 “guests” who arrive daily for the meals, three times a day. Hidden under the guise of serving meals are volunteers with talents from musical performances and instrumental flare to mural painting, hair stylists, photographers, and cosmeticians. By discovering the real talents and skills/passions of your volunteers, you unlock a whole new world of possibilities.

Once I discovered I had gifted hair stylists, cosmetic professionals, camera buffs, and singers and dancers, we moved some of them out of the kitchen peeling potatoes and onto the streets for an “EXTREME MAKEOVER FOR HOMELESS WOMEN” event on Mother’s Day. The volunteers were ready to share not only what the Mission wanted, but also what the gifted volunteers needed to feel welcomed and needed.

Spend time with your volunteers early in their offer of assistance to you. Ask them in written and verbal form about their skills and talents, their professional offerings, their inner most passions, their likes and dislikes, and their recreational hobbies and interests. By getting to know them personally, you are able to get creative in what you might be designing for your event, what you might want to offer in the future, and what you might actually need to move your vision forward. Although the present is your immediate need, think beyond that to tomorrow.

Serving food in the kitchen of the Rescue Mission were twelve talented artists who were employed by Warner Brothers Studios. Moving them out of the food line and into the Children’s Nursery and Daycare area, these volunteers shared their gifts and talents in support of a lively comic rendering of Warner Brothers characters on the wall, which delighted the mothers and children who were staring at the previous “blank canvas”. The entire feeling of the room changed, the artists were appreciated for their work, and the Mission looked better for their efforts.

As you might expect, when talented people use their skills and talents on behalf of your event or venue, they are more likely to be “personally and financially” supportive of your particular charity or event. They become worker volunteers and, in some cases, major donors to the cause because they are part of what you are doing. They speak highly of your effort to “get to know them”, and they reflect your event or venue in the best light possible because it becomes part of their reputation.

PICK A DATE AND CELEBRATE

Some volunteers just never know when to say “I’m Done!”, and they are constantly around looking for things to do long after your event or special “volunteer” time. Others disappear into the community again when you are finished with them, and you never see them again to say “thanks” beyond a mass mailing post card or introduction during the event in front of the masses.

Pick a date and celebrate your volunteers after your event to show them you are still thankful for the successes you’ve shared or the disappointments you all experienced. It doesn’t matter what the bottom line of your event was. That’s not important to a volunteer who gave time and talent to you when you said you needed it most. Now you take the time to thank them in a meaningful way. How?

Anything from a Pot Luck Supper in the middle of the off-season, or an ornament that depicts your event that you handmade or purchased in bulk are good ideas. The heart of the thank you should be focused solely on the volunteers who made your event possible.

One of the first scheduled events during the Grand Haven Coast Guard Festival is a kick-off volunteer picnic. Not only is this a first “thank you” for volunteering event, but we treat it just like a regularly scheduled event and host those that make it happen. Office staff and others help host a dinner in the volunteers’ honor, and use this time not only to recognize this year’s volunteers but also fill them in about some festival “secrets” that might occur during the ten-day period.

Our Board Recognition Event is also a “hurray” for volunteers, but this time it is even more private and more upscale. Usually the board members are invited to a “night out” event with a theme. Usually transportation, drinks, dinner, and either a live Broadway Show, a Grand Rapids Symphony performance or a specialty act designed for them perform before they are transported back to their vehicles after a fun night. It’s okay to treat different levels of volunteers differently in the recognition piece, but clearly all volunteers are special and deserve to be saluted in some way.



“Party on MI Friends!”