

GOALS

- Learn what key factors make people volunteer.
- Activate the Volunteer Ownership Cycle.
- Learn how the fields of volunteer recruitment, fundraising and employee onboarding are alike.
- Learn tools to build a valuable network to pump up your recruitment efforts.

CHAPTER ONE

ACTIVATE THE FORCE: RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS WHO OWN YOUR MISSION

MOVING HEARTS & MINDS FROM “YOU” TO “WE”

CASA programs understand the indisputable value of volunteers. They are the core of all that we do and a treasured necessity. We aim to treat volunteer recruitment as a professional endeavor worth our very best ideas, efforts and collaboration. CASA programs nationwide take this as seriously as companies take recruitment of employees, knowing that each person is a vital part of the whole.

The central question of the guide is this: How can we bring on volunteers who will not only serve the CASA mission, but also genuinely make it their own?

How can we recruit the volunteers who will find real purpose in life by serving the children? How can we attract those who will speak with such passion about CASA’s work that their friends will be drawn to the agency? What’s the pathway to securing devoted volunteers and facilitating a rock-solid bond? Getting an idea of some of the primary reasons why people do or don’t volunteer is a good way to start¹.

WHY PEOPLE VOLUNTEER



To make a difference in people’s lives.



To support an organization, community or cause.



To learn something new.



To meet people.



To develop personally or professionally.



They have an idealized view of people who volunteer and feel that they don’t measure up.



No one asked them.



What they do as a volunteer doesn’t match what they had hoped to get out of volunteering.



They don’t clearly understand what they are being asked to do.

THE VOLUNTEER OWNERSHIP CYCLE

This guidebook is a companion text to *The Art of Coaching for Volunteer Retention*. It’s framed using the Volunteer Ownership Cycle, which is a concept based on the fundraising field’s donor pipeline. The Volunteer Ownership Cycle moves volunteers from the You phase (**Awareness**) to the We phase (**Ownership**). The volunteer’s commitment builds over the evolution of their **Awareness**, **Involvement** and **Engagement**, until it finally lands at the true goal of **Ownership**. See how it works on the next page.

THE VOLUNTEER OWNERSHIP CYCLE

OWNERSHIP

- I've taken more than one CASA case.
- I recruit for and serve as a spokesperson for CASA.
- I happily take on leadership roles.
- CASA's mission is also my own personal mission.

INVOLVEMENT

- I've completed an interview.
- I've been selected for CASA advocate training.
- I believe this cause is a good one.
- I'm eager to learn more and get to know people here.



2

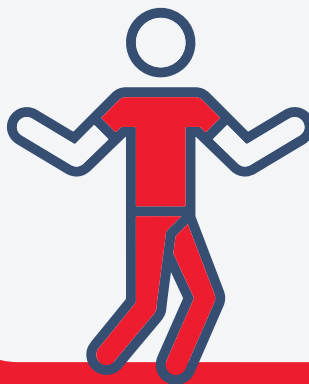


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THE YOU PHASE



"When I talk about CASA, I see myself as supportive but separate."



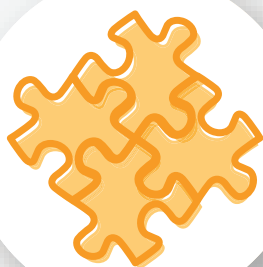
*"When I talk about CASA,
I say 'we.' I see myself as a
part of CASA."*

4



THE WE PHASE

3



ENGAGEMENT

- I'm undergoing training.
- I've accepted a CASA case.
- I see and feel the results of CASA's work in the world.
- I share CASA's values.



AWARENESS

- I saw a CASA ad on TV.
- I recognize the CASA name.
- I have a rough idea of what the group is about.
- A friend told me about her volunteer work at CASA.

GIVING SPECIAL ATTENTION TO EACH STAGE

We treat each phase differently and invest different resources in the volunteer's development based on where they are in the cycle. The **awareness** and **involvement** stages are a time of mutual discovery. Here's an example: You learn from a current volunteer that his child's teacher is interested in getting continuing education about the child welfare system. You capitalize on this quickly and ask the volunteer for an introduction. Email the teacher, tell him more about CASA and harness his motivation of new learning. Invite the prospect to an upcoming continuing education conference, and offer to chat on the phone. In one conversation, you've activated the original **awareness** and transformed it into **involvement**. Now keep them close and stay in touch!

Next, if we do our jobs right, volunteers move into the We phases – **engagement** and **ownership**.

The **engagement** stage is a time of experiencing the impact of CASA firsthand. In this stage, people are actively coming to the CASA office, have taken training, and are meeting children, shadowing an advocate or working a case.

Imagine that you have a new volunteer lending a hand with admin skills in the CASA office. After a few months, offer them a leap: the chance to shadow a seasoned advocate. This is a transition to deeper **engagement**. They may become your next great CASA.

People who have been working cases for a while may also be in the **engagement** phase, or may be between **engagement** and **ownership**. Perhaps they've worked several cases and are ready to get involved on a higher level. Keep track of where volunteers are in the cycle, and encourage coach supervisors to see the big picture and do the same.

In the **ownership** stage, a volunteer has made a significant investment in the organization. They serve and they recruit from their circle of influence. They regularly seek out opportunities to connect others with the mission.

Say that you recruited an accountant two years ago, and after their first case, they took on a second one. Then they decided to reach out to their faith community to seek new volunteers, and to offer a brown-bag meeting at their workplace in order to fundraise for CASA at the holidays. This volunteer has embraced the CASA community and sees this work as a meaningful part of their life.

WHY DO PEOPLE BECOME ADVOCATES?

Human behavior is almost always motivated by multiple factors. There's never one single reason why we do something, and new folks come to CASA for a wide variety of reasons. The more we tailor recruitment efforts to multiple motivations, the more likely it is that a potential recruit will complete training and accept their first case.

There are both logical and emotional reasons why a CASA volunteer joins the cause. Some advocates will align their mission with that of CASA because of their passion to make a difference in children's lives. Others will embrace the mission because they bring the logic necessary to objectively deal with hard topics. Some come because they have the professional skill set to navigate through difficult situations.

CHILD ADVOCATES OF FORT BEND (CAFB): CHILDREN CAUGHT IN THE SYSTEM TRAINING

CAFB created a unique training for a variety of professionals involved with children. They offered Continuing Education Units (CEUs) so that it would be enticing to social workers, teachers and law enforcement officials who must earn CEUs annually.

Others come because they were abused and neglected as kids, and they've reached a place in life where they're devoted to preventing this from happening to other young people. Still more come because they are looking for deeper meaning in their lives.

Learn the real motivations for each of your advocates. What's driving their desire to get involved? What are they looking for, personally? Develop a relationship with your volunteers to understand their personal mission and values, and how those align with CASA's mission.

A CASA volunteer receives ongoing professional development and develops an expansive skill set in dealing with the legal, child welfare and education systems. Becoming an advocate is not only a life-changing experience, but also a resume builder. For those who may be new to the workforce, or returning after an absence, it has a lot of professional appeal. For those who may seek a career in social services, law or child development, there is no better training ground.

One of the beauties of being an advocate is the opportunity to grow emotionally, professionally and intellectually.

MAKING RELATIONSHIPS THE CENTER OF RECRUITMENT

It's better to take a targeted approach and meet real people where they are than to cast a wide recruitment net in shallower waters. We're here to get in deep and build relationships that last. So take time to reduce ambiguity around the expectations and responsibilities of being a CASA volunteer.

Create a clear picture of the characteristics your organization is looking for in potential recruits. With insights, you can recruit efficiently and build long-lasting relationships by moving people down the path to **ownership**.

Imagine that you are a Human Resources recruiter at a large corporation. Companies spend significant time investing in potential employees because they want to ensure their skill set aligns with the position and their recruit will have longevity. They may take a recruit to dinner to get to know them better. CASA programs don't have the resources of corporations, but we can probably take people to coffee! We can also throw a barbecue or potluck so people get to know each other as a group. The quickest way to commitment is to get personal.

Another way to conceptualize the relationship is to imagine volunteers the same way we think about financial donors. The donor pipeline is a concept for assessing where donors are in the process: from identification, to cultivation, to solicitation, to stewardship. In raising major gifts for an organization, staff members cultivate long-term relationships. A high-quality advocate or auxiliary volunteer has the same value to an organization as a major donor, and recruiting them requires similar cultivation skills.

THE BENEFITS OF AN IMPROVED ONBOARDING & SELECTION PROCESS



REDUCED STRESS

Connect potential advocates with experienced volunteers so they can ask questions to better understand unique situations they may encounter as an advocate. Learn about all of their questions so you can take any stress or uncertainty out of the equation.



IMPROVED ADVOCACY

When a CASA clearly understands the expectations of their role as well as the mission of CASA, their advocacy for the children they serve will be more effective. Take time to reduce ambiguity around expectations for, and responsibilities of, a CASA volunteer.



INCREASED SATISFACTION

By spending time with incoming volunteers and learning about their lives and motivations, you provide a foundation for increased satisfaction. The more a recruit understands about the role and feels personally connected, the more they can walk confidently in advocacy and feel great about their contributions.



BETTER RETENTION

When volunteers are happy with an organization, the odds of them seeking another opportunity are much lower. As a result, stress reduction, improved advocacy, and satisfaction all add up to the ultimate goal of higher rates of retention.

THE SELECTION PROCESS

Of course, not all potential recruits will be selected. It's important to talk about the application, interview and training as a **selection process**. See chapters 4, 5, and 6 for further details.

Some people are really better suited for auxiliary roles—not the monthly commitment of visiting a child and writing a report, or the intensity of speaking to the court. Think creatively about how to engage them! Ask them to brainstorm other things they might like to do. What would they like to contribute? What would be fun and fulfilling?

For example, you can offer a student with a background in marketing the chance to make designs and do social media for your next recruitment campaign. Do you have a recruit who loves order, file folders and systems? Invite them to tackle the assignment of making your office more organized and efficient. These volunteer tasks are also vital, and the more community members are involved in the fabric of the daily work, the better the program will be rooted.

BUILDING A NETWORK FOR ROBUST RECRUITMENT

A network is the single most important tool in a recruiter's toolbox. A successful CASA recruiter knows their community well and partners with other organizations that have similar goals. The following are a couple of launching points to develop your network.



CONNECT WITH OTHER PROGRAMS

Reach out to other CASA programs! The Texas CASA website has links to all the program websites. If a program has a high-quality website, it's probably a good place to start building connections. Connect with other CASA staff and leaders on social media to learn from their recruitment campaigns or idea sharing. Of course, in-person conversations are the most powerful, so take advantage of regional meetings and gatherings. Find out what's working for your peers and share your wins, too.



ASK CURRENT VOLUNTEERS FOR LEADS

When a volunteer enters the **awareness** and **involvement** stages, take note of their gifts and connections. Who can be an asset for getting your foot in the door at a local church, or creating a partnership with a local business?

Consider gathering a small focus group of advocates. Ask questions about their experiences, and learn what it's like to spend time "in their shoes." An extended conversation can be critical to tailoring your recruitment efforts to your audience. Then, ask them to connect you with three more possible recruits. This helps a volunteer move towards the **ownership** phase of the cycle.

Volunteers grow as human beings by virtue of navigating the complex interpersonal dynamics of cases, and charting a path for children through choppy waters. They also grow as they become more committed to the program and fully take on a part in ensuring its success.

CASA OF LIBERTY/CHAMBERS COUNTIES: CASA COMPADRE PROGRAM

Volunteers who aren't ready for the commitment of advocacy can still support and enrich the program. CASA of Liberty/Chambers Counties developed a way to move these folks from **awareness** to **engagement** through a program called CASA Compadres. Compadres take a brief version of advocate training and complete the same background checks. Then, they can pitch in with office support, admin and behind-the-scenes work matched to their skill sets. Many decide to become advocates as they get comfortable. Currently, there are 27 Compadres serving the program. Executive Director Debbie Dugger says, "The CASA Compadre program has been a significant investment for our program due to our size. However, it has paid off tenfold with the number of committed volunteers who support our mission."