

# The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Booster Club: Creating a Delegation of Delegation With Volunteers

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As music educators, we tend to be very self-reliant. When times get difficult and stressful, we tend to place all the responsibility on ourselves. This tendency can have devastating consequences to the teacher and student. Why? It is simple: There is only so much one person can give. It doesn't take long for either one or two things to happen: 1) the teacher chooses to make cuts in time and energy, or 2) burnout occurs. In either scenario, the students loose! Therefore, creating a 21<sup>st</sup> century booster club is essential in developing a win-win environment for both teachers and students. I, like many teachers, reached a point where my body and my family said, "Enough! How much more can you continue to give?" And as much as I wanted to believe it, I discovered I was not Superman or the young buck I used to be. I reached this conclusion: I needed a delegation of delegation; I needed to develop a team or small army to come to my rescue and assist me in providing a program of excellence.

In my research for successful team builders, I discovered reports of visionaries who may have

masterminded great creations but the final product was actually the result of some outstanding teams. For example, Michelangelo is cited as the painter for the Sistine Chapel, yet the magnificent ceiling is the compilation of hundreds of painters and artisans under Michelangelo's guidance and vision. Thomas Edison, one of the world's most innovative minds of all time, produced 4,000 patents in a six year period of time yet research indicates that the patents were often realizations of a 14-person team. I definitely do not liken myself to the minds or talents of Edison or Michelangelo but learned several things from these great masters: a) their plans of action were very complex, b) the attention to detail and preparation was enormous, and c) the teams were strategically filled with personnel well suited for each specific task. I realized that my teams would need these same qualities and attention to

detail if I wanted to yield success and excellence. The following paragraphs offer some ideas that have proven beneficial in the 21<sup>st</sup> century booster club organization/ small business we call "Band."

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## **Planning and Empowering Volunteers**

Effective volunteer recruitment starts with a well-planned and executed methodology. To utilize volunteers successfully, consider having a Volunteer Coordinator as a key role in your 21<sup>st</sup> century booster

club. It is extremely difficult to get a volunteer to commit to the unknown. Therefore, each project team leader will need to clearly define the goals and objectives of the project, articulate the demands and challenges of the project, and define the various roles needed to complete the project team. National Service Resources recommends that before volunteer delegation occurs, each team leader needs to:

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- 1) Clarify the work that needs to be done.
- 2) Segment the work into components that reflect the needs of the volunteer force.
- 3) Consider the type(s) of volunteers needed. ie: short or long-term volunteers, time commitment needed, type (children, teenagers, adults seniors, abilities, needs, etc.)
- 4) Determine the volunteer task list including what to accomplish and steps required to get there; create a comprehensive event planning guide with assignments, number of volunteers needed, action items, delegation reports, etc.
- 5) Create volunteer position descriptions for each role.

### Volunteer Recruitment

Every booster club needs a variety of volunteers to develop a full delegation of delegation. Robert Lamb suggests three basic categories of volunteer recruitment: 1) warm-body, 2) concentric circles, and 3) ambient recruitment. Some activities such as an electronic recycling drive work day, a fruit sale product delivery, or passing out fliers advertising an upcoming road race are examples of the **warm-body** category. These events require warm-bodies to get the task completed, therefore anyone willing to volunteer will work. **Concentric circle recruitment** moves outward from the team members, expanding through existing social connections and relationships. The idea of concentric circles is like throwing a rock into a pond and watching the circles ripple out from the center to provide a scope and coverage encompassing the entire pond. Through strong relationships, one can call upon people they

trust. Lamb encourages, “who better to recruit as a volunteer than the people who are already connected to you through a relationship.” A large circle of relationships allows for more information and resources from which to access. The connection relationships allow for greater identification of individuals with specific skill sets needed to effectively complete a project team such as a web designer, marketing specialist, or a database manager. **Ambient recruitment** is when a volunteer manager enlists community organizations with similar common goals to work together on a project such as enlisting school club members required to log community service hours to work shifts in your community event like a “Taste of” or “Arts and Crafts” event. A local boy scout troop could serve as ushers or hosts

for a concert event. As the host for our district concert festival, we utilized ambient recruitment through connecting with corporate volunteers from local Kohl’s department stores.

### Volunteer Coordination

To achieve effective volunteer recruitment, every parent in your organization should complete a “Getting to Know You” form. The first section would include the normal data for contacting parents and students. The second section is used to identify their skill sets with questions regarding their employment and job description. The third section is more expanded through a check list of modifiers asking each parent to check all that apply in completing this sentence: “My friends (not my spouse) would describe me as...”

**Sharing your vision gives them (band parents) information and knowledge as to what path to travel and helps ensure that they will be excited and enthusiastic parents foraging a path in the direction you, the director, want them to travel.**

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The check box modifiers should be creative such as: glorified taxi driver, party animal, social queen, computer geek, control freak, crafty, corporate office type, handyman, gadget guru, etc. This allows the volunteer coordinator to infer a lot about the person. The taxi driver might be someone available during the school day. The computer geek might be able to help with Excel or database management. The handyman could be the next equipment dad, etc. When it comes to building your individual project teams, consider thinking of the team as a box of crayons. Two things become critically important. One, how big does the box of crayons need to be, and two, do the crayons in the box represent the full spectrum of color. Hard-working, devoted volunteers fail because the project calls for more “crayons” than were in the box. Every team should have the four basic colors covered: a) Reds (type A, leaders), b) Yellows (people oriented, influential), c) Blues (Conscientious, Task oriented), and d) Browns (steady, problem solvers). The “Getting to Know You” forms should be color-coded by the volunteer coordinator. Project leaders are empowered with the specific color and skill information to fill team

vacancies that complement and complete the team. The defined projects empowers the volunteer coordinator in determining where warm-bodies, concentric circles or ambient recruiting is needed. Thus, a delegation of delegation is prepared to rescue both the teacher and the students.

As we all begin another school year, I want to encourage directors to be very intentional in sharing your vision. Human nature leads us all to want to know “why?” Parents want the best for their child, they simply may not know what that really is in regard to band. Sharing your vision gives them information and knowledge as to what path to travel and helps ensure that they will be excited and enthusiastic parents foraging a path in the direction you, the director, want them to travel. Preparation and empowerment are the “deferred gratification” payout like compound interest. The time, energy and guidance invested by the director to nurture the planning stages and to empower the key personnel in the organization will yield huge returns once the delegation of delegation is in place and properly implemented.

### Article Sources

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