VolunteerMatch
Nonprofit Insights Webinar

Future Forecast: Four Big Shifts that Will Change Volunteerism…for the Better

Shift #1: Advances in Brain Science & Neuroleadership

- **The Big Challenge** – Utilizing volunteer administration practices that work with the brain not against it, in order to produce positive results for individual volunteers, teams, and organizations.

- **Good Reads**
  o Fog Behavior Model (http://www.behaviormodel.org)
  o Behavior Wizard (http://www.behaviorwizard.org/wp)
  o SCARF Model (http://www.davidrock.net/files/NLJ_SCARFUS.pdf)
  o Shawn Anchor on Happiness (http://www.ted.com/talks/shawn_achor_the_happy_secret_to_better_work.html
  o Positive Intelligence (http://hbr.org/2012/01/positive-intelligence/ar/1)

- **Key Takeaways**
  o In order for behavior change to occur, three elements must be present – motivation, ability, and trigger. If one is missing, the behavior cannot occur.
  o Work productivity does not generate happiness. In fact, it is the other way around – happiness generates results in the workplace.
  o Happiness can be actively cultivated by doing one of the following things on a daily basis:
    ▪ Jot down three things they were grateful for.
    ▪ Write a positive message to someone in his or her social support network.
    ▪ Meditate at their desk for two minutes.
    ▪ Exercise for 10 minutes.
    ▪ Take two minutes to describe in a journal the most meaningful experience of the past 24 hours.

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- Minimizing danger and maximizing reward is a central organizing principle of the human brain. Approach (reward) and avoid (threat) are deeply ingrained survival instincts, and the more we perceive reward the more easily we can collaborate and influence others.
- The following five domains are shown to activate the brain's circuitry to perceive reward or threat:
    - **S**tatus is about relative importance to others.
    - **C**ertainty concerns being able to predict the future.
    - **A**utonomy provides a sense of control over events.
    - **R**elatedness is a sense of safety with others - of friend rather than foe.
    - **F**airness is a perception of fair exchanges between people.

Shift #2: New Developments in Human Performance & Talent Development

- **The Big Challenge** – Designing volunteer training, teambuilding, and leadership models that are inspiring, personally fulfilling, and make the most of volunteer skills and talents.

- **Good Reads**
    - Best Practices in Talent Management Strategy (http://msshrm.shrm.org/files/Talent%20Man%20Best%20Practices%20MS%20411%20%281%29.pdf)
    - Formal vs. Informal Learning (http://www.astd.org/Professional-Resources/ASTD-Professional-Partners/Professional-Partner-Content/2013/06/Blending-Formal-and-Informal-Learning)
    - Importance of Informal Learning (http://www.learningsolutionsmag.com/articles/1009/elearning-guild-research-how-important-is-informal-learning)
    - What Motivates Us at Work (http://blog.ted.com/2013/04/10/what-motivates-us-at-work-7-fascinating-studies-that-give-insights)

- **Key Takeaways**
    - Talent Management – defined as "The implementation of integrated strategies or systems designed to improve processes for recruiting, developing, and retaining people with critical skills and aptitudes to meet current and future organizational needs" – has become a top priority for business.

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- The same could be said for many volunteer programs as they seek to cultivate a new generation of volunteer leaders.
- 50-80% of workplace learning happens informally, through self-study and social interactions; and yet, we invest most of our time and energy in formal, instructor led training (both online and in-person) expecting it to do the job.
- Collaboration, self-directed study, conversations with others, networks, and blogs are important and informal ways to learn in the workplace.
- In today's knowledge economy, efficiency is no longer more important than meaning in the workplace.
- The following are some things that make us feel good about our work:
  - Seeing the fruits of our labor may make us more productive
  - The less appreciated we feel our work is, the more money we want to do it
  - The harder a project is, the prouder we feel of it
  - Knowing that our work helps others may increase our unconscious motivation
  - The promise of helping others makes us more likely to follow rules
  - Positive reinforcement about our abilities may increase performance
  - Images that trigger positive emotions may actually help us focus

Shift #3: Migration from Solely Virtual to Virtual and Mobile

- **The Big Challenge** – Aligning volunteer communication, training, and support media and methods with how the public most commonly gets and shares information in day-to-day life.

- **Good Reads**
  - Stats on Telecommuting (http://www.globalworkplaceanalytics.com/telecommuting-statistics)
  - Stats on Cell Internet Use (http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2013/Cell-Internet.aspx)
  - How Social Media is Used in the Workplace (http://journalistsresource.org/studies/society/social-media/social-media-workplace-research-roundup#sthash.p864mwa6.dpuf)

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- Leading the Virtual Workforce (http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0470422807.html)
- Virtual Distance (http://www.projecttimes.com/articles/a-virtual-distance-primer.html)
- More on Virtual Teaming (http://virtualdistance.com/publications/)

- **Key Takeaways**
  - The growth of telecommuting (not including self-employed) increased 80% from 2005 to 2012, and federal employees have the highest rate of telecommuters.
  - 63% of adult cell owners now use their phones to go online, double the number in 2009. 21% of these do most of their online browsing using their mobile phone.
  - Some of the most popular activities for online cell phone users:
    - 81% send or receive text messages
    - 60% access the internet
    - 52% send or receive email
    - 50% download apps
    - 49% get directions, recommendations, or other location-based information
    - 48% listen to music
    - 21% participate in a video call or video chat
    - 8% "check in" or share their location
  - 56% of companies use social media to find prospective employees (up from 34% in 2008), but few have yet to adopt it to communicate with employees (only 16% use social media frequently to engage and foster productivity).
  - Virtual teams experience a "connectivity paradox" – The more connected people are, the more isolated they feel.
  - "Virtual Distance" is a term that describes and measures these psychological effects. The following three factors affect Virtual Distance:
    - **Physical distance**, which reflects different work schedules and status within organizations as well as geographical separation.
    - **Operational distance**, which is caused by poor communication, multitasking and dissatisfaction with responses to problems. Feelings of isolation caused by concentrations and dispersions of staff also contribute to operational distance.

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- **Affinity distance**, which reflects how positive or dysfunctional personal relationships among team members might be.
    - o Of the three, affinity distance is the most critical; developing strategies to manage and reduce it can be highly productive.

Shift #4: The Increasing Importance of Data

- **The Big Challenge** – Harnessing and analyzing data in manageable, affordable, and scalable ways, in order improve individual volunteer programs and the field of volunteerism as a whole.

- **Good Reads**
    - o Big Data (http://www.mckinsey.com/insights/business_technology/big_data_the_next_frontier_for_innovation)
    - o Little Bets (http://petersims.com/book)
    - o What Drives Impact Measurement? (http://www.ssireview.org/blog/entry/raising_the_bar_on_nonprofits_impact_measurement)
    - o Improvements in Impact Measurement (http://www.ssireview.org/blog/entry/ten_years_of_performance_measurement)
    - o Perform Well (http://www.performwell.org) and Center for What Works (http://www.whatworks.org)

- **Key Takeaways**
    - o Digital data collection is now part of virtually every business transaction as well as many social functions. This data has yet to be fully marshaled to improve processes and arrive at solutions for the greater good.
    - o "Big Data" refers to datasets that are so large they are beyond the ability of a typical database or software tools to capture, store, manage, and analyze. The term (and relative size of the dataset) varies by sector, depending on what is currently available in that specific industry.
    - o Concerted efforts have been made to aggregate meaningful outcomes measurements and to share best practices in the nonprofit sector. 75% of charities measure some or all of their work, nearly three-quarters have invested more in measuring results in the past five years, but not all have fully taken advantage of the opportunities offered by data analysis.

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- Productive and creative thinkers practice small experiments such as failing quickly to learn fast, trying imperfect ideas, and engaging in highly immersed observation that allow them to make unexpected connections and gain invaluable insights. These methods are different than the conventional thinking and problem solving our educational system overemphasizes at the expense of creativity.
- Five improvements in performance management have emerged over the last 10 years:
  - The move from overhead to outcomes in rating nonprofit performance
  - The move from philosophy to evidence-based decision making about funding and program design
  - The move from isolated to collaborative data collection and analysis
  - The move from straightforward analysis of interventions to a more complex, systems-based approach
  - The move from program evaluation to performance management

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