



How to Manage Business Volunteers in Next Gen Sector Partnerships

Next Gen Sector Partnerships are all about taking action and getting results. That said, organizing and managing volunteers to achieve results is both a critical and often challenging task. Here are five effective volunteer management principles gleaned from Next Gen experience:

1. **Make Motivating Job One.** Keeping volunteers motivated is different than keeping employees motivated. They don't work for you. You will need to rely on more carrot than stick to keep them motivated, helping them balance their need to attend to their business, with their responsibility to deliver for the Partnership. Give them the opportunity to take ownership of basic deliverables, increasing their scope of responsibility over time. Run effective meetings by sticking to the agenda, getting them to lead discussions of progress and challenges, focusing on decisions, and ending on time. Create opportunities to showcase their successes, giving them a starring role.
2. **Help Volunteers Expand Their Thinking About What Roles They Can Play.** The first role business champions play is setting industry priorities, but as the Next Gen sector partnership advances, they can play many other roles. You may need to help them understand the range of roles they can play (see the Job Description for Industry Champions tool in the Next Gen toolkit, which includes specific examples).
3. **Assemble Volunteer Teams with Complementary Skills.** Get to know the relative strengths of volunteer team members. Give them appreciative feedback on their strengths, encouraging them to leverage those strengths further. Work with them to identify gaps and help recruit people to fill them. Volunteers want to be successful and if you can help them add partners with skillsets they don't have, they will appreciate being part of an effective team.
4. **Cultivate Friendships to Deepen Trust.** Always think people and relationships when taking action. Any deliverable is an opportunity to team key people, enabling them to deepen their trust relationship by working together towards a common goal. Always work in networking time into meetings and celebrations. Above all: be creative in giving volunteers opportunities to become closer friends and trusted partners.
5. **Build the Bench.** Be explicit about an on-boarding process and mentoring of new volunteers. Make sure they understand the distinctive Next Gen approach and their role working as part of a team to drive action. Develop a succession plan for Partnership



leadership—i.e., Partnership co-chairs, action team/committee leads, board membership, etc.

Exercise: Industry Volunteer Management Self-Assessment and Roadmap

Describe what the business leadership of your Next Gen Partnership is (1) doing now in each area, and (2) could do to improve volunteer management.

Management Practice	Current Approach	Proposed Improvements
<i>Motivate Individuals</i>		
<i>Expand Thinking of Roles to Play</i>		
<i>Assemble Teams with Complementary Skills</i>		



<i>Cultivate Friendships/Trust</i>		
<i>Build the Bench</i>		



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