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DUBLIN CITY, DUN LAOGHAIRE
RATHDOWN, FINGAL & SOUTH DUBLIN

Dublin Volunteer Management Seminar 2014

Citi, Tuesday 13 May 2014

Get it Right – Interviewing Volunteers

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Environment, Community and Local Government





Get it Right – Interviewing Volunteers

Session objectives

- To discuss the importance and purposes of having interviews with prospective volunteers.
- To review or initiate the four key steps in the interview process.
- To design relevant interview questions and review the essential role of listening during the interview process.
- To propose options for handling challenging situations that occur during interviews.



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Activity

What were the skills and qualities of the interviewer?

Much is learned about the art and skills of good interviewing by analysing someone who interviewed you well.



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Get it Right – Interviewing Volunteers

Four Key Concepts

1. The primary purposes of interviewing volunteers are to determine a mutual fit between the candidate and the organisation, and to screen for risks.
2. There are four key steps in the interview process: Preparation, Opening, Body and Closing.



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Get it Right – Interviewing Volunteers

Four Key Concepts

3. Two essential skills in interviewing are designing and asking questions and reflective listening
4. It is important to prepare for special problems that might present themselves during the interview.


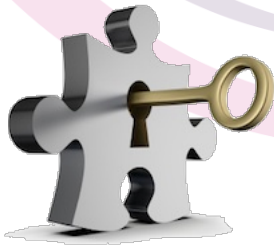


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Key Concept 1

The primary purposes of interviewing volunteers are to determine a mutual fit between the candidate and the organisation, and to screen for risks to the volunteer, the organisation, and the clients if the prospective volunteer is chosen.



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Importance of Screening

- Mutual screening
- To protect service users.
- To maintain paid staff and volunteer morale.
- To guard the organisation's reputation.



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Screening Volunteers

1. Risk Management
2. Identify and Managing Risk
3. Appropriate recruitment process
4. Application Forms
5. Interviews (Group & Individual)
6. Reference Checks
7. Garda Vetting & ID verification
8. Orientation and induction training
9. Supervision and Support
10. Exit Interview




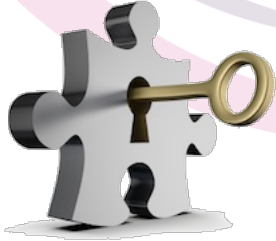
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Key Concept 2

There are 4 Key Steps in the interview process:

Preparation, Opening, Body and Closing.



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Preparation

- Let the interviewee know practical issues in advance.
- Review what you know about the applicant.
- Review pertinent information about the available volunteer position(s).
- Assemble material about the agency.
- Formulate questions.
- Schedule adequate time.
- Arrange for private, comfortable place.
- Cast aside all distractions.



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Opening

- Greet and put applicant at ease, establish rapport.
- Clarify the purpose of the interview:
“... to determine if we have a match...”
- Establish timeframe and format for interview.



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Body of Interview

There are three basic sections of an interview:

- You provide information on the agency, program, clients served, etc.
- Applicant shares information about him / herself through thoughtful questioning.
- You describe available volunteer positions or other options for involvement.

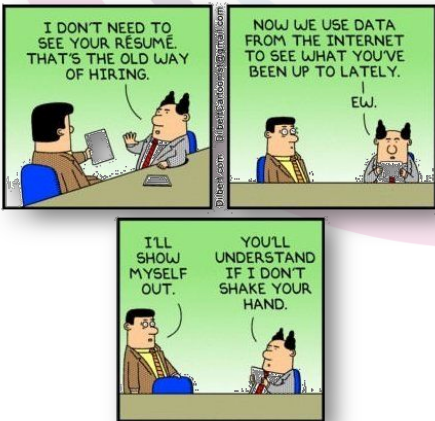



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Closing

- Review and summarise what surfaced during the interview.
- Discuss next steps: **If mutual acceptance:** explain how volunteer becomes active. **If no match:** encourage honest sharing and refer to VC.
- Don't inform them of decision at interview
- Express appreciation for their time.



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Key Concept 3

Two essential skills in interviewing are:

- Designing and asking questions based on an analysis of the position and required qualifications
- Reflective listening assuring that both individuals are hearing and understanding.

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Designing & Asking Questions

- Word questions to elicit the information you need.
- Open-ended questions are best.

Activity: Write down:

- Volunteer position requirements.
- Desired characteristics of ideal volunteer.
- Questions to elicit useful screening information.



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Core Questions

- When several applicants interview for the same volunteer position, ask them all some core questions so you can compare their suitability.
- Situational questions determine how the person might react to specific experiences.




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Listening

- Listen to understand what is meant – not to get ready to reply, contradict, or refute.
- What is meant involves more than words (tone of voice, facial expression, overall behavior).
- Don't interpret too quickly. Look for clues and put yourself in the speaker's shoes.
- Put aside your own views and opinions for the time being.

Realise that you cannot listen to yourself inwardly and at the same time listen outwardly to the speaker.



CANARY PETE



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Listening

- Control impatience – listening is faster than talking.
- Do not prepare to answer while listening.
- Show interest and alertness.
- Do not interrupt.
- Ask questions to secure more information, not trap the speaker
- Use the technique of linking (*probing*) to build on what the interviewee has already said.




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Key Concept 4

It is important to prepare for special challenges that might present themselves during the interview.

What special challenges have you already experienced or anticipate might occur?




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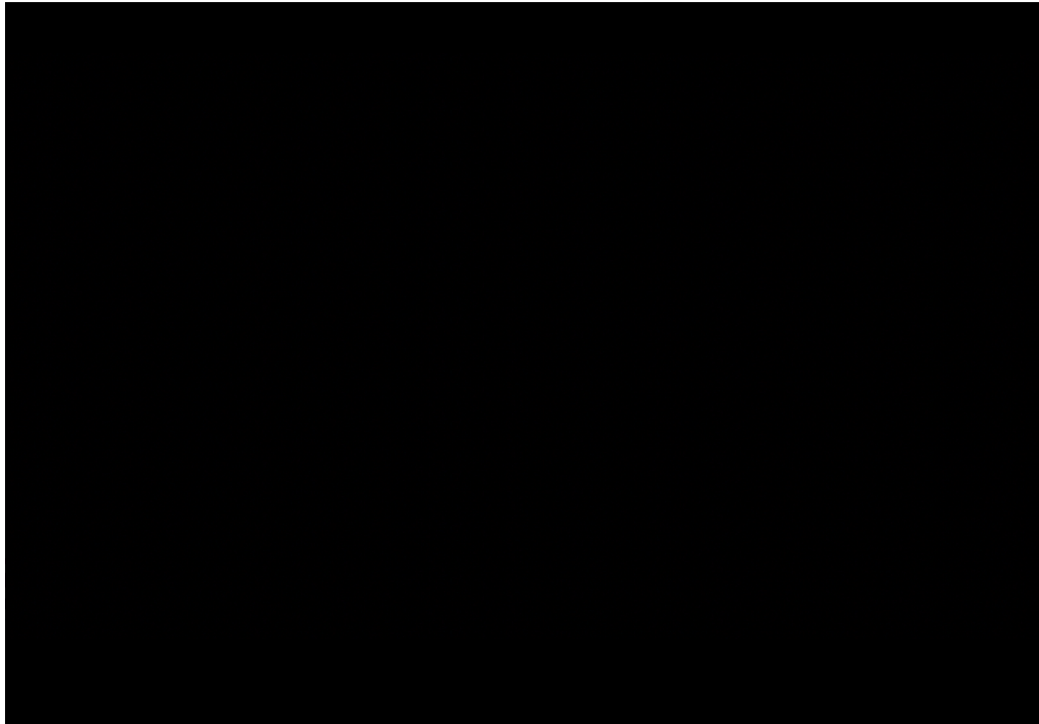
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Possible Interviewing Challenges

- The very shy
- The very talkative
- Unmotivated, maybe because service is a requirement
- Attitude problem, despite skills
- Wants position, but is not qualified
- Only available for short-term work
- Interviewing only on the telephone
- Online interviewing for virtual volunteering




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Summary

- Nothing you do will impact the volunteer programme more positively than effective interviewing and mutual screening.
- When the right people are in the right volunteer roles, the role of volunteer manager is a pleasure!

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