

The background is a dark charcoal grey. It is filled with numerous hand outlines of various sizes and colors, including green, orange, white, teal, and pink. These outlines are drawn with thin, continuous lines and are scattered across the page, some overlapping each other. The overall effect is a sense of many hands reaching out or coming together.

Pioneering Volunteer Makers - 21st Century Volunteering



**VOLUNTEER
MAKERS**

“

I had previously applied for several volunteering opportunities, and handed in countless forms, each as long and tedious as the others so when TWAM adopted the Volunteer Makers model it was a relief to know how straight forward the application was and I enjoyed the gamification of the site which allowed me to get started straight away and choose what appealed to me. It was a fun and creative way to volunteer

”

Hannah Mather,
Tyne and Wear Archives
and Museums volunteer

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Introduction

More than 40% of us today in the UK are volunteering¹ which equates to over £23 billion of value.² This is a huge opportunity for heritage and other sectors. However, a rethink of how volunteering is offered is required by organisations today. The issue is that time spent volunteering has been consistently decreasing in the UK since 2000³. The challenge is although more people want to volunteer, they have less time to give. Such a critical change has created friction for organisations using a traditional model of “recruiting” volunteers, as opposed to engaging volunteers.

Organisations recognise the need to increase their volunteer hours (often as part of their sustainability model) but, without re-thinking the volunteer offer, they are struggling to find and retain volunteers, especially amongst new generations. A new era of audience engagement – with social digital – creates further challenges. Those that persist with the traditional model of applying a one-size fits all approach are failing to find sustainable numbers for their organisations. Volunteer Makers is a solution to these challenges.



At the present time we are in a very stagnated position with a regular cohort of volunteers who give of their time freely... Very much as we would see traditional volunteering particularly with an older age group



National
Holocaust
Centre

Overview

Volunteer Makers blends volunteering with public participation through effective digital engagement delivered through an innovative training model and technology – creating social and economic impact and a tangible value exchange with volunteers. It harnesses a revolution that, through shifting demographics, is moving volunteering away from the traditional recruitment model.

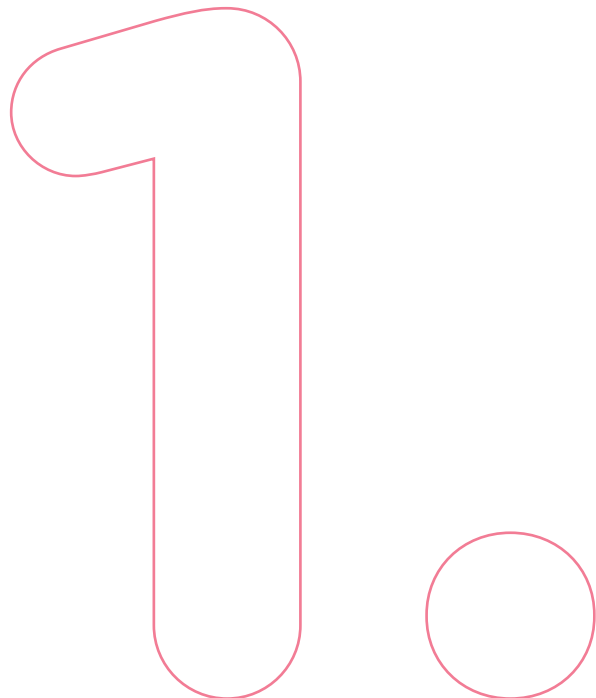
1. Changes in the value and division of unpaid volunteering in the UK: 2000 to 2015 (2017), ONS. *Formal irregular volunteering. Informal irregular is 60% (Getting Involved, NCVO 2017)*
2. Ibid. *The value of formal volunteering through an organisation.*
3. Ibid

Pioneer Profile: Corinium Museum

Located at the heart of Cirencester, Corinium Museum charts the development of the Cotswolds from its prehistoric landscape to the modern day. The museum has been using its Volunteer Makers platform since February 2017. They have totally changed the way they approach volunteering:

“Thinking about challenges including micro ones has completely made us rethink how we use volunteers. Before we were in a situation we would recruit volunteers and think how we would use them. Now look at programme coming up and think about how to use volunteers on and off site. Fundamental shift for us”

corinium.volunteermakers.org



“

Our average age is 69, so we have formed a Museum Young Volunteers Club but would like to have a deeper engagement with under 25s plus more working age volunteers

”

Background

Volunteer Makers began as a pilot programme working with target sectors, which developed into a national programme for museums supported by Arts Council England, Creative England and digital marketing agency Tickbox Marketing. Collaborating and innovating from the outset, we established partnerships to evaluate, learn and evolve the ideas, model and frameworks for training and technology around Blended Volunteering.

We have pioneered Volunteer Makers through training and technology with over 60 museums, galleries and heritage organisations and now wish to extend our programme, working with communities and other sectors.

A key strategy for Volunteer Makers was working with trusted sector networks to target our training effectively and ensure we didn't duplicate resources. We created a sense of joined-up thinking, working together across established relationships.



With micro [volunteering] we've been able to engage people on the other side of the country in a volunteer task... [they've been] generally younger, slightly more female, but age groups going lower



Corinium Museum



Pioneer Profile: Snapping the Stiletto

Snapping the Stiletto is a project celebrating the achievements of Essex Women in the 100 years since some women got the right to vote. Funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Collections fund the project is working with 11 museums across Essex to help them to recruit volunteers to explore their collections and discover hidden stories of Essex Women. They launched their Volunteer Makers' platform in March 2018.

"The training was really useful in bringing together the partners and giving us the time and space to reflect on where we all are with volunteering in our various organisations and how we can move forward. For me personally it showed me how the platform can work really well to provide a framework for what is quite a complicated project with a lot of partners"

Pippa Smith, Snapping the Stiletto Project Manager

snappingthestiletto.volunteermakers.org



[We've] already had younger people enquiring. Seems like they are wanting to volunteer already and making contact and now [we're] directing them to the site [and] can say even if not regular opportunities sign up and see what there is



Rugby Art Gallery and Museum

Overview

Volunteer Makers is a solution to:

- Economic uncertainty and changes to funding
- Opportunities created due to shifts in demographics with more people wanting to volunteer, but being time restricted
- Diversifying supporters
- New audience engagement methods
- Organisations working together to create engagement across regional clusters or networks

Riding the Wave of a Volunteer Revolution – the principles that underpin our model

At the heart of the Volunteer Makers' approach is the idea of value exchange

– emphasising volunteering as a two-way transaction between organisations and their volunteers where both sides receive something of tangible value. For museums, this is most easily measured in the financial impact of the support they receive and the growth of their supporter community.

For volunteers there are the social benefits of well-being as well as practical benefits, such as skills development. The value of Volunteer Makers to the organisations we work with can also be measured in improvements to the organisation-wide approach to volunteer engagement, particularly around digital.



A Volunteer's perspective on value exchange:



Getting the whole organisation involved at all levels has been really important. Planning multiple opportunities for people to get involved and think about what aspects of Volunteer Makers might appeal to the motivations of different teams



Geffrye Museum of the Home

"Clearly the museum is getting something out of my weekly visits but I was unprepared for the return effect it would have on me. I had spent a number of years in research where I have not used my photographic skills or visual creativity (despite my background as an artist), and although this role may not sound like it, actually it woke up that dormant part of my brain. Since I started I have been able to create work again and I have all sorts of ideas flowing around my mind again. Some of which are directly inspired by my experience – I have begun to think about how I could create some work responding to the museum's collection, or to the forthcoming changes to some of the galleries in the museum. This has definitely been a mutually beneficial relationship which I want to continue"

Caroline Morris,
Corinium Museum volunteer

Overview

Volunteer Makers' Principles:

- Community engagement is through the capacity of the community hub/organisation
- An organisation-wide engagement culture is established because the model of engagement brings different teams together
- Value exchange, measured, understood
- Takes account of a new era of digital engagement (social digital)



Volunteer Makers' Training and Toolkit

Volunteer Makers' training and toolkit provide the opportunity to understand, think through and plan a new approach to engaging and valuing your volunteers. This is then supported by our technology platform.

Our training Toolkit includes:

Testing your Organisation-wide engagement culture

Making a Step-Change to Blended and Micro volunteering

Volunteer Makers' planning and implementation template

Volunteer Makers' planning support Stages



It has helped us in revising and looking at our volunteer strategy. We were very responsive – whereas now we can review volunteers [and] utilise them properly, with what we can offer



National Museum of the Royal Navy



The Volunteer Makers' training session really sold itself to the team, it demonstrated a clear vision. The team could see the opportunities and during the workshop, Claire helped us to think about our aims for volunteers and where we wanted to be in the future. It helped us to have a shared vision. Also key for buy in was to invite all members of the team as everyone plays a part. To encourage those who are resistant by speaking their language and appealing to how they will personally benefit

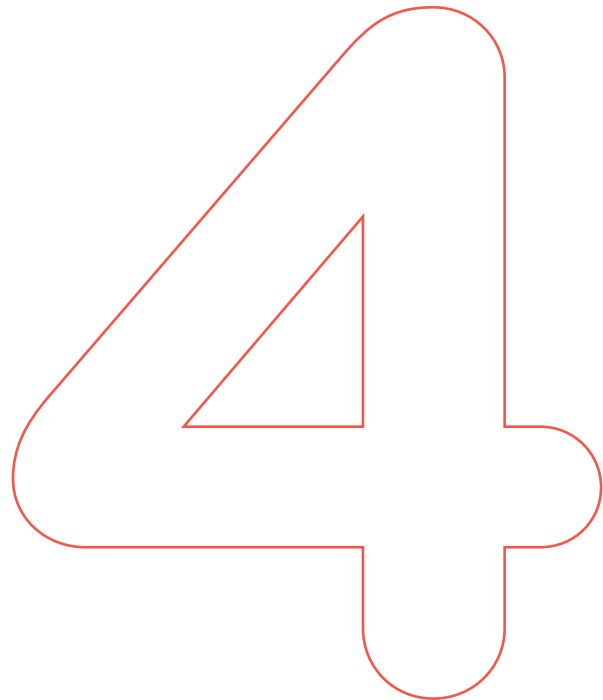


Rugby Art Gallery and Museum

Overview

Volunteer Makers' workshop training:

- Understanding 21st century volunteering
- Understanding the Volunteer Makers' model
- Understanding blended and micro volunteering
- Engaging a wider group of volunteers
- Organisational next steps
 - making the step-change
- Creating an organisation-wide plan
- Using the Volunteer Makers' platform



“

Volunteering has been streamlined, thank goodness! As volunteer coordinator I currently moderate Volunteer Makers and I drive the meetings, thought processes and trouble shooting. My role is being able to support the day to day managers of volunteers in creating challenges and supporting volunteers and going through all the processes. [It] has given the day-to-day managers the opportunity to be able to consider what opportunities they have more clearly. [They are] able to put up own challenges without authorisation, so quicker and can get quick voluntary help when they need it. Communication between regular volunteers and managers is swifter

”

Volunteer Makers' Technology

Volunteer Makers' technology brings people together through volunteer activity to do good and make the extraordinary happen. The Volunteer Makers' platform is a volunteer engagement and management platform that uses social networking, gamification and digital matching to transform the way organisations work with volunteers.

It allows organisations to target volunteering to supporters and members of their wider community based on specific skills, interests and availability and allows volunteers to take ownership of their own activity. Volunteer Makers has been created to deal with specific, highly relevant and relatively recent challenges affecting our target market.



Introducing Volunteer Makers has seen a wider demographic of people sign up with interest to volunteer with the museum. Age ranges have become much more balanced across the board. Interest from non-visiting community groups has doubled which is amazing! We are excited to continue to harness the power of this digital technology, to continue to offer a broad range of opportunities and better reflect the diverse community in Hackney



Geffrye Museum of the Home

Overview

The Platform:

- Matches the needs of your organisation to the skills and interests of your supporters
- Has a unique Volunteer Makers' challenge database
- Integrates social media and creates a volunteer community
- Incorporates volunteer communication tools
- Reports the economic impact of volunteering to the criteria of major funding bodies
- Incorporates volunteer management tools



[Feedback from volunteers] has been massively positive – lots of compliments on its appearance, particularly the layout, and they are all in agreement that it is much prettier and attractive than the third-party site we were using. They really liked the way they can now have their own accounts to check what they've signed up for



Southampton Arts and Heritage



Collaboration, Learning and Evolution Driven by Inspiring Leadership

We are driven by sharing ideas, collaborating and being sector-led. This makes Volunteer Makers a solution that is more than theory, it is also in practice. Through our learning and evaluation stages we are feeding back to our research and development team to evolve the technology and training tools.

The Volunteer Makers' model understands that in times of critical change – economic uncertainty and demographic shifts – inspiring leadership is key to bringing teams together to make change happen. Our Volunteer Makers' programme has engaged leaders in the museum sector who have taken on the vision and model, inspiring their teams and wider audiences.



By working in partnership with the internal team, council departments, leaders and local agencies we began to achieve 'buy-in' [to Volunteer Makers], which in turn helped to deliver the project. It was clear, as a leader of this programme, I needed to use an organisational wide method to ensure the staff and current volunteer team supported the change and to encourage legacy... For the vision and plans to continue, even if I was no longer there, the team needed to believe in the vision and feel a sense of ownership to continue the project



Jessica Hartshorn,
Learning and Outreach Officer,
Rugby Art Gallery and Museum,
Leadership Through Influence
– Arts Connect Leadership
Programme essay.



Overview

The impact of Volunteer Makers through our national programme:

- Strategic shift in thinking by organisations from passive approach to volunteers to active and business-led, organisation-wide
- National spread of pioneers for a new model of volunteer engagement, including working with Museum Development
- Scalability from tiny museums run by one-person part time to National Museums
- Strong peer to peer relationships to share the learning and good practice
- Interest from other sectors – libraries, archives, theatre, outdoors etc.

What we learnt from our programme (that Volunteer Makers can support):

- Many organisations aren't thinking strategically about the value of volunteering, it's potential as a revenue opportunity, or for audience engagement and development
- Volunteering is often siloed, and lack of a volunteer coordinator role can be seen as a barrier to participation (although for some organisations that can be the driver)

- Streamlining volunteer management is a priority for most museums, so the digital tools have developed to meet this need
- The importance of planning
 - how to roll out Volunteer Makers and how to work together – this strategic thinking takes much of the time needed
- Some areas within organisations do not have access to digital engagement tools, e.g. social media
 - work with marketing on this
- An organisation-wide engagement culture helps to mitigate changes in staff and provide inspiring, flexible challenges that help deliver business need, and value volunteers taking part in that
- Open up Volunteer Makers to all your volunteers – new opportunities will be taken up and by different people





We now recognise that a volunteer is not only someone who gives one day a week to help with regular activities, but can be anyone who gives their time – however small – to help with museum projects, promotion and engagement



Chelmsford Museum



Thinking about Volunteer Makers has made me think about breaking-down opportunities and what people will be doing, rather than being so general – more people can be involved



Nature in Art



What Volunteer Makers has made myself, colleagues and volunteers themselves think is that it is a broader field (e.g. remote volunteering) and we now consider even infrequent volunteers, part of volunteer body. [It's a] change in perception. Just thinking that literally anything can be volunteering



Ripon Museum



Pioneer Profile: Rugby Art Gallery and Museum

Rugby Art Gallery and Museum is a cultural hub located in the centre of Rugby. It exhibits contemporary and modern art and has displays of Roman and local social history objects. For the Rugby World Cup in 2015, they ran a Fanzone venue, schools' programme and events and recruited about 50 volunteers. They managed to keep many of these to support the gallery and museum, however, two years down the line they hadn't looked at how they were going to continue recruiting, especially a broader demographic. They launched their Volunteer Makers' platform in November 2017.

"Volunteer Makers seems to be an answer to our needs. A new way of attracting

younger audiences and offering micro-volunteering (small pockets of time which can be on or off site) was an exciting way forward. It would also give us an opportunity to review our policies and engage more staff in supporting volunteering as they could set smaller more manageable challenges"

"Claire helped us to set an action plan during the workshop with a vision and aims. This, so far, has enabled the project to move forward. Regular group meetings looking at our progress and working with the team and our current volunteers to overcome any challenges. Our officers are setting challenges, front of house staff are selling Volunteer Makers, volunteers are currently testing it. Everyone plays a part"

"It's had a really big impact... having the terms and conditions on the platform makes sure that it's all done. It has made us update all policies and procedures across the organisation, it's also made us think about volunteering strategically – a planned process. In the past we met on a 1:1 basis every 6 months or so with a potential volunteer. Now looking to do meetings 3 times a year to train people up for regular opportunities"

ragm.volunteermakers.org

Sharing the Volunteer Maker Vision with You



In our first Volunteer Makers' national programme, supported by Arts Council England and Tickbox Marketing, we saw much demand and excitement around our vision with museums, galleries and arts organisations. This has inspired us to evolve and innovate our model, our technology and our training. We have established a community of Volunteer Makers pioneers and there is a palpable buzz around what is being achieved. We are planning future Volunteer Makers' programmes with libraries, community hubs/ organisations and health. We are always looking for new partners and pioneers for Volunteer Makers and we now extend our training and tech products to all organisations



Claire Sully,
Volunteer Makers
Programme Director



Become a Volunteer
Makers Pioneer 2018-20,
get in touch now at
hello@volunteermakers.org



Glossary of Terms

Blended Volunteering: Volunteer Makers blends public participation with volunteering (be it regular or smaller pockets of time) through effective digital engagement

Challenge: A volunteer opportunity packaged in a fun way that widens the engagement of volunteers

Micro-volunteering: Smaller volunteering tasks, done in less time but with greater frequency. Accessible technology has enabled micro-volunteering to grow in popularity in recent years

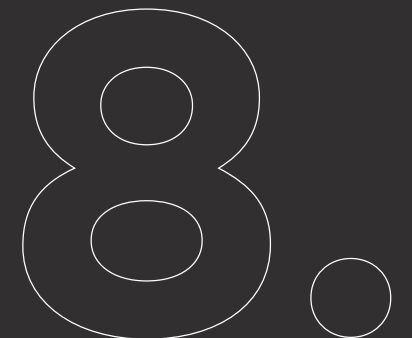
Organisation-wide: Teams throughout the organisation working together to develop and engage audiences

Social Digital: Where people come together on digital platforms (e.g. social media) around issues, causes or interests creating communities who can be engaged with

Stage: Breaking down support to various specific delivery stages

Step-Change: Breaking down a goal into smaller steps to achieve it

Value Exchange: Understanding shared values and sharing benefits between an organisation and a supporter



Stay in touch

www.volunteermakers.org

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[@volunteermakers](https://twitter.com/volunteermakers)

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