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Retention of Volunteers in a Non-Profit Organization: Sustaining Motivation and Work Satisfaction of Direct Service Volunteers at Accord, a Center for Dispute Resolution Inc.

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RETENTION OF VOLUNTEERS IN A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION: SUSTAINING
MOTIVATION AND WORK SATISFACTION OF DIRECT SERVICE VOLUNTEERS AT
ACCORD, A CENTER FOR DISPUTE RESOLUTION INC.

BY

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CAPSTONE PROJECT

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Executive Summary

Direct service volunteers are a critical component to ACCORD's service delivery and mission accomplishment. Therefore, ACCORD is committed to maintaining its cadre of direct service volunteers. However, in 2012, ACCORD noticed a drop in the number of its direct service volunteers. The current Executive Director of ACCORD linked this drop with the budget cut the agency experienced in May 2011, which resulted in ACCORD's inability to provide as much support and to offer tangible rewards to its direct service volunteers as frequently as it used to.

In order to explore and address the aforementioned problem, two different data collection methods were utilized. I interviewed ten direct service volunteers and sent an online survey to 59 direct service volunteers to understand their motivations, reward expectations, and work satisfaction. In total, 28 individuals completed the survey.

Four findings emerged from the collected data: 1) altruism and the opportunity to learn and practice skills and abilities are the most important motivators for ACCORD's direct service volunteers; 2) ACCORD's direct service volunteers prefer intangible rewards; 3) ACCORD's direct service volunteers are satisfied with their volunteer experience and professional growth opportunities; and 4) the majority of interviewees are satisfied with ACCORD's volunteer management practices.

Based upon these findings, I am making three recommendations to ACCORD: 1) concentrate on providing and creating intangible rewards for direct service volunteers; 2) focus on providing direct service volunteers with the tangible rewards that are most important for them; and 3) maintain the current volunteer management style.

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Problem Definition

Volunteer retention is a pressing issue in non-profit organizations that depend on the skills and time of the direct service volunteers. In these organizations, direct service volunteers possess special skills and closely interact with service recipients. They play critical roles in the everyday work and ability of an agency to deliver its services. The turnover of direct service volunteers can have negative consequences for a nonprofit organization. Turnover can compromise service delivery, result in an agency needing to devote considerable financial, human and time resources to volunteer training and recruitment, decrease the prestige and trust of the agency in the community, negatively affect the morale of other volunteers and may even threaten an agency's very existence.

ACCORD, A Center for Dispute Resolution, Inc. is a small non-profit organization with a mission to promote peaceful alternatives to conflict through mediation and other dispute resolution services, training, and advocacy. It provides different types of mediation services to the community (such as small claims, divorce, custody and visitation negotiations, and other services), runs the CASA Program (Court Appointed Special Advocate), offers a variety of trainings in the community on dispute resolution and positive communication skills, conciliates a range of disputes and provides team building assistance to organizations.

ACCORD has two types of volunteers: indirect service volunteers, who have little or no contact with the agency's clients, and direct service volunteers, who closely interact with agency clientele. ACCORD's direct service volunteers are divided into two types of volunteers: Volunteer Neutrals and CASA Volunteers. Volunteer Neutrals provide individuals, families and organizations with all kinds of mediation services. CASA Volunteers promote a safe and stable living environment for children at risk of abuse and neglect.

The ability of ACCORD to deliver its services to its target population and achieve its mission is highly dependent on the work of its direct service volunteers. ACCORD is very concerned with the retention of the direct service volunteers. In an attempt to decrease attrition of the current cadre of its direct service volunteers, ACCORD tries to provide as much support to its volunteers as it can. It offers training and continuing education opportunities, tries to appropriately utilize its volunteers by taking into consideration their schedule and case assignment preferences, provides some tangible rewards (such as gift cards) and gives annual recognition awards to its volunteers.

However, as a result of a 61% budget cut in May of 2011, ACCORD now cannot provide as much support to its volunteers and offer tangible rewards as frequently as it used to (Kacey Ellsworth, personal communication, 11/20/2012). The former and current Executive Directors of ACCORD both believed that the lack of tangible rewards and decrease in support for volunteers have contributed to increased dissatisfaction among ACCORD's direct service volunteers and has resulted in some volunteers leaving their positions (Richard Squire and Kacey Ellsworth, personal communication, 10/09/2012).

According to ACCORD's current Executive Director, approximately 75% of volunteers were attending volunteer meetings prior to the budget cuts (Kacey Ellsworth, personal communication, 10/09/2012). After the budget cuts, ACCORD could no longer provide food, and only 25% of volunteers attended the meetings in 2012 (Kacey Ellsworth, personal communication, 10/23/2012). More than half (55%) of the direct service volunteers expressed their concern in the annual evaluation they complete about the level of support provided to them by ACCORD (Kacey Ellsworth, personal communication, 11/30/2012).

In addition, there has also been a drop in the number of volunteers working for ACCORD. According to ACCORD statistics on volunteers, the organization had 42 CASA Volunteers and 68 Volunteer Neutrals in 2011 (Kacey Ellsworth, personal communication, 10/23/2012). In 2012, the number of direct service volunteers dropped to 34 CASA Volunteers and 52 Volunteer Neutrals, representing a 19% drop in CASA Volunteers and a 24% drop in Volunteer Neutrals (Kacey Ellsworth, personal communication, 10/23/2012). At the beginning of 2013, ACCORD has only 24 CASA Volunteers and 40 Volunteer Neutrals, which indicates further attrition of direct service volunteers (Kacey Ellsworth, personal communication, 03/14/2013).

Finding new ways to retain direct service volunteers and increase their job satisfaction is important for ACCORD's ability to provide its services and achieve its mission. According to ACCORD statistics, the average CASA Volunteer works 10 to 12 hours per month, and the average Volunteer Neutral works 2 to 4 hours per month (Kacey Ellsworth, personal communication, 11/20/2012). Together, all the 24 CASA Volunteers and 40 Volunteer Neutrals work between 320 to 448 hours per month. This is equivalent to one working month of two to three full time employees. With just one full-time and seven part-time staff members (Kacey Ellsworth, personal communication, 4/17/2013), ACCORD cannot provide the volume of services to its target population and function effectively without its direct service volunteers.

In recent years, many non-profit organizations have experienced financial problems similar to those of ACCORD and are also heavily dependent on their direct service volunteers. Having a greater understanding of volunteers' motivations, and the factors influencing their work satisfaction and retention will help not just ACCORD but other nonprofits facing comparable challenges. Thus, this Capstone project will focus on answering the following questions:

- 1) What motivations do ACCORD's direct service volunteers have?
- 2) What factors influence ACCORD's direct service volunteers' work satisfaction and retention?

Literature Review

Volunteer retention is an important and challenging issue for many nonprofit organizations, especially for those, like ACCORD, whose mission execution depends on volunteers' skills, time, and commitment (Garner & Garner, 2011; McBride & Lee, 2011; Skoglund, 2006; Hartenian & Lilly, 2009). High volunteer turnover rates can cause substantial financial costs for recruiting, training, and replacing volunteers, negatively affect an agency's morale, undermine its prestige in the community, and have harmful service delivery implications (Jamison, 2003; McBride & Lee, 2012; Skoglund, 2006). Understanding volunteer motivations and expectations as well as the reasons for volunteer turnover can help nonprofit leaders adopt effective approaches in recruiting, managing, and retaining volunteers (Shye, 2009; Dolnicar & Randle, 2007). This literature review will provide an understanding of volunteers' motivations, needs, and reward expectations, the factors that influence their work satisfaction, the reasons why volunteers leave and approaches for retaining volunteers.

Motivations of Volunteers

Numerous scholars have tried to understand the motivations of volunteers and used different approaches ranging from one-dimensional to multidimensional frameworks to study this. Within this body of literature, scholars have identified two primary perspectives for understanding why people volunteer. The first perspective cites altruistic reasons for volunteering, that is, the desire to help others (Unger, 1991). The second focuses on the volunteer's egoistic reasons, that is, the desire to receive some benefits from being involved

(Hartenian & Lilly, 2009). However, most often, instead of focusing on one perspective or the other, scholars have supported the notion that volunteers have multifaceted reasons for volunteering. In other words, people volunteer for a combination of altruistic and egoistic reasons (Clary, Ridge, Stukas, Snyder, Copeland, Haugen, & Miene, 1998; Phillips & Phillips, 2010; Garner & Garner, 2011; Shye, 2009; Dolnicar & Randle, 2007).

Volunteers' Needs and Reward Expectations

Despite the different approaches researchers have used to study volunteer motivation, there is an agreement among scholars that the reasons why a person is motivated to volunteer can explain what rewards the person wants to acquire and what needs he or she wants to satisfy through the volunteering experience (Clary et al., 1998; Phillips & Phillips, 2010; Shye, 2009; Dolnicar & Randle, 2007). Different people engaging in the same volunteering activity may expect to get different rewards and satisfy different needs. For example, some people who volunteer believe that engagement in a volunteering activity will contribute to their positive feelings and self-esteem (Yanay & Yanay, 2008). Others want to make friends and be a part of the community (Shye, 2009). Still others volunteer because they expect to receive career-related benefits and job promotion (Clary et al., 1998) or because they know somebody who is involved in the organization (Dolnicar & Randle, 2007).

Factors Contributing to Volunteers' Work Satisfaction

Since need satisfaction and rewards are “accomplishments” volunteers expect to receive from the very beginning of their volunteer experience (Jamison, 2003, p. 116), many scholars link the ability of volunteers to satisfy their needs and receive rewards initially with their ongoing work satisfaction, motivation to perform better and intention to continue volunteering. For example, Clary et al. (1998) found that volunteers whose initial needs were met were not

only satisfied with their work but intended to continue to volunteer in future. According to Phillips and Phillips (2010), volunteers generally do not expect to receive costly rewards, but they are still motivated and encouraged by various rewards. This finding suggests that while rewards are important, they do not necessarily need to be costly to the organization.

Scholars have also identified a variety of other factors that could positively impact volunteers' experience, work satisfaction, and retention. For instance, congruence between a volunteer's and organizational values influences a volunteer's decision to remain in the organization (Vuuren, de Jong & Seydel, 2008). Personal and professional growth opportunities have also been identified as factors that have a positive impact on volunteers' experiences and commitment (Jamison, 2003; Skoglund, 2006). Finally, the ability to develop and maintain respectful relationships within the organization (Boezeman & Ellemers, 2009) and to perform challenging and interesting tasks (Millette & Gagné, 2008) are positively related with work satisfaction, performance, and willingness to stay.

Reasons for Volunteer Turnover

In addition to identifying those positive factors that contribute to volunteer's work satisfaction, scholars identify the negative factors that contribute to volunteer turnover. Training, especially if long and extensive, can cause "motivational saturation" (Yanay & Yanay, 2008, p.70) and result in volunteers dropping out immediately after the training. Too much autonomy and absence of clear guidelines and instructions can also raise the feeling of abandonment and fear and lead to volunteers' turnover (Yanay & Yanay, 2008). Other organizational factors that sometimes cause volunteers to leave include: loneliness and anxiety; stressful working conditions; lack of recognition, open communication, and support; monotonous and unchallenging tasks; and tense relationships with staff members (Skoglund, 2006; Yanay &

Yanay, 2008; Jamison, 2003; Garner & Garner, 2011). In addition to these organizational factors, personal and medical reasons, such as relocation to another area or illness, can result in volunteer turnover but have nothing to do with volunteer motivation or work satisfaction and are beyond the control of the organization (Millette & Gagné, 2008).

Approaches for Retaining Volunteers

To minimize turnover and maximize volunteer retention in nonprofit organizations, scholars suggest several approaches, including: 1) considering volunteers' motivations from the beginning, 2) informing volunteers of the tasks they will perform, 3) encouraging open communication and feedback from volunteers, 4) combining routine work with interesting and challenging tasks, 5) engaging volunteers in group works, 6) providing adequate supervision and support, 7) providing personal and professional growth opportunities, 8) recognizing and rewarding volunteers for the work they do, and 9) creating a fun and enjoyable working environment (Garner & Garner, 2010; McBride & Lee, 2012; Jamison, 2003; Boezeman & Ellemers, 2009; Karl, Peluchette & Hall, 2008). Following these suggestions, nonprofit leaders will be able to understand volunteers' needs, better match volunteers with the roles they expect to perform, and help volunteers build friendly and strong interpersonal relationships with other people in the organization, as well as improve volunteers' experience, satisfaction, and long-term commitment.

Based on this literature review, this study will examine the motivations, reward expectations, and factors influencing work satisfaction for two types of ACCORD's direct service volunteers: Volunteer Neutrals and CASA Volunteers. In addition, this study will explore the methods for increasing direct service volunteer work satisfaction and recommend strategies for their retention in the organization.

Methodology

In order to address the problems defined in this Capstone, I used two different data collection methods. To understand motivations, reward expectations, and work satisfaction of ACCORD's direct service volunteers, I conducted an online survey and a series of individual semi-structured phone interviews with ACCORD's direct service volunteers.

Data Collection

Survey

I selected all of ACCORD's current direct service volunteers as the target population for the survey. Then using survey monkey, an online survey instrument, I created a questionnaire (see Appendix C) and sent a survey link to ACCORD's Executive Director. After that, ACCORD's Executive Director forwarded the survey link to the direct service volunteers who had provided their electronic mailing addresses. During the data collection period from March 13, 2013, to March 19, 2013, 59 surveys were distributed and 28 were returned, resulting in a response rate of 47%.

Volunteers were asked to provide demographic information, including age, gender, employment and marital status, level of education, race, and annual household income (characteristics of the sample can be found in Appendix E). They were also asked to identify the number of years they had volunteered at ACCORD and the number of hours they spend volunteering in an average month, as well as several close-ended questions about their general satisfaction with their volunteer experience.

In addition to that, the survey contained several questions based on information presented in the literature review. To measure the motivations of ACCORD's direct service volunteers, I utilized an 18-item version of the original 30-item Volunteer Function Inventory (VFI), a tool to

measure volunteer motivation developed by Clary et al. (1998). Eighteen statements addressed six volunteer motives (three for each motive) and included: 1) values (to express altruistic or humanitarian concerns), 2) understanding (to learn or practice skills), 3) social (to strengthen social relationships), 4) career (to gain career related benefits), 5) protective (to reduce negative feelings or guilt over feeling more fortunate), and 6) enhancement (to get satisfaction from personal growth or self-esteem). Volunteers were asked to indicate their level of agreement with eighteen statements using a 5-point likert-scale (with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree). I then added the average scores for the three items to calculate a total score for each motivation. As total scores on each scale could range from 3 to 15, the closer the score is to 15, the more important the motivation is to survey respondents.

To assess ACCORD's direct service volunteers' reward expectations, I used a 14-item list of possible rewards. Some items were taken from the 28-item list of rewards developed by Phillips and Phillips (2010), and some items were based on suggestions from ACCORD's Executive Director. Possible rewards were presented in the form of statements. Volunteers were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statements using a 5-point likert-scale (with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree). The statements included both tangible (e.g. "Receiving a gift card from ACCORD is important for me") and intangible rewards (e.g. "Receiving a verbal thank you from staff is important for me") and covered a wide variety of possible rewards (see Appendix E).

I did not collect any identifiable information during the survey and guaranteed anonymity of the answers. ACCORD volunteers participated in the survey on a voluntary basis and were not obligated to answer all questions in the survey (Complete results of the surveys can be found in Appendix E).

Interviews

In addition to the survey, I also conducted individual semi-structured phone interviews with ten of ACCORD's direct service volunteers. These volunteers were randomly selected from the list of ACCORD's direct service volunteers provided by the Executive Director. To interview the selected volunteers, I used nine open-ended questions (see Appendix D). The questions that I asked focused on understanding volunteer motivations, exploring the factors that volunteers associate with a positive volunteer experience and identifying challenges and factors that influence volunteers' continued commitment to ACCORD.

The interviews took place during the time period from March 18, 2013, to March 23, 2013. Each interview lasted for about twenty five minutes. I asked for permission to audio record all phone interviews and also took detailed notes during interview sessions. I assured interviewees that their confidentiality would be maintained and destroyed all audiotapes and notes after the completion of the data analysis.

Strengths and Limitations

There are several benefits of using the survey and interviews to collect my data. The online survey allowed me to get quick responses from a large number of volunteers. Using Clary et al.'s Volunteer Function Inventory (1998) to measure six dimensions of volunteer motivation and Phillips and Phillips' list of potential rewards (2010) helped me to ensure that the survey results would be more consistent and comparable. Using preexisting data collection tools also gave me greater confidence that my survey would measure the concepts I wanted to measure and that survey respondents would be consistent in their interpretation of survey questions.

Individual semi-structured phone interviews allowed me to interview volunteers who had busy schedules or were out of town. Phone interviews also minimized the identification risk for

volunteers, assisted in creating a relaxed atmosphere, and may have encouraged volunteers to provide more open and sincere answers. In addition, semi-structured interviews provided me with ability to probe and change the order of the questions, ask volunteers to elaborate on their responses, and get more detailed and in-depth answers.

While there are several advantages to using the survey and individual semi-structured phone interviews to collect my data, some limitations still exist. The online survey was created using Survey Monkey and was sent to ACCORD's direct service volunteers who provided their email addresses. This could have created challenges for the volunteers with limited computer skills. Although providing flexibility, the semi-structured character of the phone interviews also had some limitations. It made it difficult to conduct the interviews in a consistent manner. In addition, some of the volunteers may not have provided accurate responses to my questions. Some of the volunteers could have been new to the agency and did not have enough experience to properly assess ACCORD's volunteer management practices. Others might have had long lasting, friendly relationships with ACCORD's staff and been reluctant to talk about negative aspects of their volunteer activity and improvements they wished to be made. Still others might have been afraid that I would share what we discussed in the interviews with ACCORD staff. To minimize this concern, I assured interviewees their answers would be confidential.

Data Analysis

To analyze the online survey results, I used descriptive statistics method. I used average scores to identify motivations and percentages to identify reward expectations of direct service volunteers and overall satisfaction with their volunteering experience at ACCORD. To analyze the individual semi-structured phone interview data, common themes were identified, grouped, and examined. These themes included reasons for volunteering at ACCORD, overall satisfaction

with the volunteering experience, evaluation of ACCORD's program of rewards and recommendations for improving volunteer management.

Findings

Based on descriptive statistics and thematic analysis, several common themes emerged from the collected data: 1) altruism and the opportunity to learn and practice skills and abilities are the most important motivators for ACCORD's direct service volunteers; 2) ACCORD's direct service volunteers prefer intangible rewards; 3) ACCORD's direct service volunteers are satisfied with their volunteer experience and professional growth opportunities; and 4) the majority of interviewees are satisfied with ACCORD's volunteer management practices.

Finding #1: Altruism and the opportunity to learn and practice skills and abilities are the most important motivators for ACCORD's direct service volunteers.

Survey results showed that altruism and the opportunity to learn and practice skills and abilities were the two main motivations of ACCORD's direct service volunteers. Out of six motives for volunteering (Clary et al., 1998), the "value" category, which refers to altruistic reasons for volunteering, and the "understanding" category, which refers to the desire to learn and practice skills and abilities, received the highest scores. Scores were calculated by averaging the responses to the three statements that assessed each motive and are illustrated in Table 1. As can be seen from the table, reasons related to volunteer values received an average score of 13.3 out of a possible 15, and were the most popular motive for volunteering. Understanding received a slightly lower average score (12.5) and was the second most popular motivation for volunteering.

Table 1: Average Scores of Six Motives for Volunteering

Total Average Scores	Motivations					
	Values	Understanding	Enhancement	Social	Career	Protective
	13.3	12.5	10.8	9.4	8.7	8.2

Thematic analysis of individual interview answers showed similar results. Interest and ability to perform specific types of volunteer work were the most popular motivations for ACCORD's direct service volunteers, with four out of ten volunteers indicating it as their reason for volunteering. The second most popular motivation for volunteering, mentioned by three out of ten volunteers, was the desire to give back to the community. As one of the volunteers noted, "I was looking for something useful to do to give back to the community after I retired."

Finding #2: ACCORD's direct service volunteers prefer intangible rewards.

With respect to reward expectations and preferences, survey results indicate that ACCORD's direct service volunteers do not seek costly rewards. According to Table 2, large majorities of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that all the intangible rewards asked about on the survey were important to them. As Table 2 illustrates, all of ACCORD's direct service volunteers agreed or strongly agreed that *feeling satisfied about volunteer experience* and *helping make the community a better place* were important to them. On the other hand, the only tangible reward that the vast majority of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed was important was *the opportunity to have free training and education*, with 86.4% of volunteers indicating it as being important. Less than half of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that each of the other tangible rewards were important to them, with many respondents indicated that they were neutral in terms of the importance of these rewards. Also as can be seen from Table 2, slightly more than 40% of respondent agreed or strongly agreed that *receiving a thank you note from ACCORD*, *having an Annual Volunteer Recognition event*, and *having a picnic*

with other volunteers and staff were important for them. Although it cannot be concluded with confidence that these types of rewards are important for ACCORD’s direct service volunteers, they still may be utilized and contribute to sustaining motivation and work satisfaction for at least some volunteers.

Table 2: Top four intangible and tangible rewards

Type of Reward		Strongly Disagree/ Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree/ Agree
<i>Intangible</i>	Feeling satisfied about my volunteer experience is important for me.	0% (0)	0% (0)	100% (22)
	Helping make the community a better place is important for me.	0% (0)	0% (0)	100% (22)
	Being able to use skills to help others is important for me.	0% (0)	4.5% (1)	95.5% (21)
	Receiving a verbal thank you from staff is important for me	9.1% (2)	9.1% (2)	81.8% (18)
<i>Tangible</i>	Having free training and education opportunities is important for me.	0% (0)	13.6% (3)	86.4% (19)
	Receiving a thank you note from ACCORD is important for me.	13.6% (3)	40.9% (9)	45.6% (10)
	Having an Annual Volunteer Recognition event is important for me.	18.2% (4)	40.9% (9)	40.9% (9)
	Having a picnic with other volunteers and staff is important for me.	9.1% (2)	50% (11)	40.9% (9)

The interview results were consistent with the survey results and showed that ACCORD’s direct service volunteers do not seek costly rewards and appreciate the types of rewards they receive. Of the seven volunteers¹ who were asked to reflect on ACCORD’s reward system, six of the interviewees felt that they receive enough appreciation from people they serve and ACCORD. Reflecting the sentiments of these six volunteers, one interviewee reported not expecting or needing “a whole bunch of rewards.” According to another volunteer, “I think they

¹ This was an additional question that I only asked the seven of the ten ACCORD direct service volunteers I interviewed, after the third volunteer brought this issue up in the conversation.

[ACCORD] have a nice program of rewards ... I think she [supervisor] knows what I am doing and appreciates that. That's all I need.”

Finding #3: ACCORD's direct service volunteers are satisfied with their volunteer experience and professional growth opportunities.

An overwhelming majority of ACCORD's direct service volunteers were satisfied with their volunteer experience and the types of training provided by ACCORD. Over 95% of the surveyed volunteers were happy with their volunteer experience at ACCORD. In addition, 96.3% of volunteers were pleased with the initial training, and 88.5% were also satisfied with additional training opportunities provided by ACCORD. Despite the fact that 51.9% of direct service volunteers said that they have thought about leaving ACCORD, all the surveyed volunteers expressed their desire to continue volunteering.

Interview results were consistent with the survey findings. Five out of ten interviewees indicated they were very pleased with their volunteer experience, six out of ten were extremely or very satisfied with the initial training provided by ACCORD, and all ten expressed their desire to continue volunteering. When asked what they like most about ACCORD highly professional staff, dedicated volunteers, and support were the three most popular answers, as can be seen from Table 3. Talking about the initial training, four of the ten volunteers especially liked that the training was very informative and four indicated that the training prepared them for their volunteer responsibilities. As one of the volunteers noted, “It was such a good training, prepared me so well for what I'd experience as a volunteer. It was just incredibly informative.” Additionally, three out of ten volunteers enjoyed having guest speakers at the training and valued the opportunity to ask them questions. When asked about the desire to continue volunteering at ACCORD, all ten direct service volunteers expressed their desire to stay. The type of work they

do (four interviewees) and work satisfaction (three interviewees) were the two main reasons for staying at ACCORD. As one of the volunteers noted, “This little voluntary job gives me satisfaction, so I am very happy.”

Table 3: What do you like about ACCORD?

Answers	Number of Responses
Staff	5
Other Volunteers	4
Support Provided to Volunteers	3

Finding #4: The majority of the interviewees are satisfied with ACCORD’s volunteer management practices.

In addition to being satisfied with the overall volunteer experience and training opportunities, interview results showed that ACCORD’s direct service volunteers are satisfied with the way ACCORD works and communicates with them. When asked about what they do not like or think should be improved in the agency, six out of ten interviewees reported that there was nothing they disliked and could not think of anything that should be improved. As one of the volunteers noted, “Any problem in the past was addressed immediately. I just cannot really think of anything.”

When asked about what ACCORD can do differently to help them in their work, similarly, seven out of ten interviewees expressed their satisfaction with what ACCORD was doing and could not give any suggestions. One of the volunteers noted, “The experience that I received is very positive and I don’t think of anything that could be improved. I am pretty happy with the way it was.”

The suggestions for improvements that volunteers made varied. One volunteer suggested that ACCORD should devote more time for supervisors and volunteers to communicate and share experience at the monthly CASA meetings. Another expressed the need to have a “very

proactive” and viable board, especially in the areas of fundraising and outreach to the community. One wished that ACCORD could sometimes offer funds to cover the costs of the training outside of the Broome County. Finally, two others said that ACCORD should be more visible and increase community awareness about the services it provides.

Recommendations

Based upon literature review and findings, I suggest three recommendations for ACCORD. The recommendations are as follows: 1) ACCORD should concentrate on providing and creating intangible rewards for its direct service volunteers; 2) ACCORD should focus on providing direct service volunteers with the tangible rewards that are more important to them; and 3) ACCORD should maintain its volunteer management style.

Recommendation #1: ACCORD should concentrate on providing and creating intangible rewards.

As highlighted in the reviewed literature, although, volunteers are encouraged and motivated by various types of rewards, these rewards should not necessarily be costly to the organization (Phillips & Phillips, 2010). Additionally, reviewed literature showed that volunteers motivated by altruistic or humanitarian motives do not expect to receive valuable or costly benefits and are more likely to stay in the organization because their own values align with the values of the organization (Vuuren, de Jong & Seydel, 2008).

ACCORD’s direct service volunteers are primarily motivated by altruistic motives and the opportunity to learn and practice skills and abilities (Finding #1), and they prefer and value intangible rewards over tangible ones (Finding #2). Thus, to increase its direct service volunteer work satisfaction and retention, I recommend that ACCORD concentrate on offering more intangible rewards to its direct service volunteers. This could be done by reminding volunteers

about the importance of the work they do, sending out annual reports on the number of people served, and recognizing and publicly acknowledging their work accomplishments during meetings and through emails. ACCORD should also continue expressing gratitude verbally and via email, maintaining its friendly atmosphere, and taking into consideration volunteers' schedules and case assignment preferences.

Recommendation #2: ACCORD should focus on providing direct service volunteers with the tangible rewards that are more important to them.

Personal and professional growth opportunities have a positive impact on volunteers' experience and commitment (Jamison, 2003; Skoglund, 2006). As can be seen from Finding #2, having free training and education opportunities is the only tangible reward that a large majority of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed was important to them. Also nearly 90% of survey respondents were satisfied with training opportunities provided to them by ACCORD (Finding #3). Since opportunity for professional growth is positively linked with volunteers' experience and commitment and because ACCORD's direct service volunteers are generally satisfied with training opportunities they have received, I recommend that ACCORD continue providing its volunteers with professional growth opportunities.

In addition, I recommend that ACCORD allocate resources to the two other top tangible rewards: the picnic and thank you notes. Although these types of tangible rewards also received a high percentage of "Neutral" responses, I suggest that ACCORD should still devote time and resources to them. Giving thank you notes for ACCORD's direct service volunteers and having a picnic do not require substantial costs and time and can be easily implemented. Thank you notes are another way to recognize direct service volunteers, and the picnic is an additional opportunity to socialize and build friendly relationships between staff and volunteers. All this

will contribute to positive volunteer experience, work satisfaction and commitment to the agency.

Recommendation #3: ACCORD should maintain its volunteer management style.

There is no reason for ACCORD to change its volunteer management style. An overwhelming majority of ACCORD's direct service volunteers are satisfied with their overall volunteer experience and the training opportunities provided by ACCORD (Finding #3). The majority of interviews are also satisfied with the way ACCORD works and communicates with them and do not have anything they do not like or wished to be changed or improved in the agency (Finding #4). In addition, all of survey respondents and interviewees expressed their desire to continue volunteering at ACCORD (Finding #3). For this reason, I recommend ACCORD to continue its current volunteer management practices.

Conclusion

The ability of ACCORD to provide services to its target population and achieve its mission is highly dependent on the work of its direct service volunteers. The findings that emerged from this study show that ACCORD's direct service volunteers are mainly motivated by altruistic motives and the opportunity to learn and practice new skills and abilities. They value intangible rewards and are satisfied with the current professional growth opportunities and their overall volunteer experience. Therefore, in order to sustain work satisfaction and the commitment of its direct service volunteers, ACCORD should concentrate on providing a greater variety of intangible rewards and maintains its volunteer management style.

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Appendix A

Date: March 12, 2013

To: Olga Tyurina, CCPA

From: Anne M. Casella, CIP Administrator
Human Subjects Research Review Committee

Subject: Human Subjects Research Approval

Protocol Number: 2232-13

Protocol title: *Retention of Volunteers in a Non-profit Organization: Sustaining Motivation and Work Satisfaction of Direct Service Volunteers at ACCORD, A Center for Dispute Resolution Inc.*

Your project identified above was reviewed by the HSRRC and has received an Exempt approval pursuant to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) regulations, 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) .

An exempt status signifies that you will not be required to submit a Continuing Review application as long as your project involving human subjects remains unchanged. If your project undergoes any changes these changes must be reported to our office prior to implementation.

Please complete the modification form found at the following link:

http://research.binghamton.edu/Compliance/humansubjects/COEUS_Docs.php

Principal Investigators or any individual involved in the research must report any problems involving the conduct of the study or subject participation. Any problems involving recruitment and consent processes or any deviations from the approved protocol should be reported in writing within five (5) business days as outlined in Binghamton University, Human Subjects Research Review Office, Policy and Procedures IX.F.1 Unanticipated Problems/adverse events/complaints. We require that the Unanticipated Problems/adverse events/complaints form be submitted to our office, found at the following link:

http://research.binghamton.edu/Compliance/humansubjects/COEUS_Docs.php

University policy requires you to maintain as a part of your records, any documents pertaining to the use of human subjects in your research. This includes any information or materials conveyed to, and received from, the subjects, as well as any executed consent forms, data and analysis results. These records must be maintained for at least six years after project completion or termination. If this is a funded project, you should be aware that these records are subject to inspection and review by authorized representative of the University, State and Federal governments.

Please notify this office when your project is complete by completing and forwarding to our office the Protocol closure form found at the following link:
http://research.binghamton.edu/Compliance/humansubjects/COEUS_Docs.php Upon notification we will close the above referenced file. Any reactivation of the project will require a new application.

This documentation is being provided to you via email. A hard copy will not be mailed unless you request us to do so.

Thank you for your cooperation, I wish you success in your research, and please do not hesitate to contact our office if you have any questions or require further assistance.

cc: file
Kristina Lambright

Diane Bulizak, Secretary
Human Subjects Research Review Office
Biotechnology Building, Room 2205
Binghamton University
85 Murray Hill Rd.
Vestal, NY 13850
[*dbulizak@binghamton.edu*](mailto:dbulizak@binghamton.edu)
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Appendix B

Date: March 14, 2013

To: Olga Tyurina, CCPA

From: Anne M. Casella, CIP Administrator
Human Subjects Research Review Committee

Subject: Modification Approval

Protocol Number: 2232-13

Protocol title: *Retention of Volunteers in a Non-profit Organization: Sustaining Motivation and Work Satisfaction of Direct Service Volunteers at ACCORD, A Center for Dispute Resolution Inc.*

Your project modification, which involves audio recording interview sessions with permission of the interviewees, was reviewed by the HSRRC and has received an exempt approval pursuant to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) regulations, 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) .

An exempt status signifies that you will not be required to submit a Continuing Review application as long as your project involving human subjects remains unchanged. If your project undergoes any other changes, these changes must be reported to our office prior to implementation.

Please notify this office when your project is complete by completing and forwarding to our office the following form:

<http://humansubjects.binghamton.edu/Forms/Forms/Protocol%20Closure%20Form.rtf>

Upon notification we will close the above referenced file. Any reactivation of the project will require a new application.

This documentation is being provided to you via email. A hard copy will not be mailed unless you request us to do so.

cc: file
Kristina Lambright

Diane Bulizak, Secretary
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Biotechnology Building, Room 2205
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Appendix C

Survey Instrument

ACCORD's CASA Volunteers and Volunteer Neutrals Survey

My name is Olga Tyurina. I am an MPA student at Binghamton University who interned at ACCORD, A Center for Dispute Resolution Inc. in summer 2012. I am conducting a survey to help ACCORD understand the motivations, reward expectations, and factors that influence work satisfaction of its volunteers. The information gathered from this survey will be used to improve ACCORD's strategies in volunteer management and retention.

You can choose whether or not to participate in the survey. You do not have to answer all questions and may stop at any time. Your survey responses will be kept confidential. All the information collected will be kept in a password protected computer.

Thank you so much for your time!

I. General Information

1. What type of volunteer are you?

- CASA Volunteer
- Volunteer Neutral
- Both CASA Volunteer and Volunteer Neutral

2. How many years have you been volunteering at ACCORD?

- Less than 6 months
- 6 to 11 months
- 1 to 3 years
- 4 to 7 years
- 8 to 10 years
- More than 10 years

3. In a typical month, about how many hours do you volunteer at ACCORD?

- 1 to 3 hours
- 4 to 6 hours
- 7 to 9 hours
- 10 to 12 hours
- More than 12 hours

II. Reasons for Volunteering

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

1. My friends volunteer.

- Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

2. People I'm close to want me to volunteer.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

3. Volunteering makes me feel important.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

4. By volunteering I feel less lonely.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

5. I can make new contacts that might help my business or career.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

6. Doing volunteer work relieves me of some of the guilt over being more fortunate than others.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

7. Volunteering increases my self-esteem.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

8. Volunteering allows me to gain a new perspective on things.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

9. Volunteer allows me to explore different career options.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

10. I feel compassion toward people in need.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

11. I feel it is important to help others.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

12. Volunteering helps me work through my own personal problems.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

13. I can do something for a cause that is important to me.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

14. Volunteering is an important activity to the people I know best.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

15. I can learn how to deal with a variety of people.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

16. Volunteering experience will look good on my résumé.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

17. Volunteering is a way to make new friends.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

18. I can explore my own strengths.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

III. Rewards

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

1. Receiving certificate of appreciation is important for me.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

2. Receiving a thank you note from organization is important for me.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

3. Feeling satisfied about my volunteer experience is important for me.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

4. Being able to use skills to help others is important for me.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

5. Having snack tables during volunteer meetings is important for me.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

6. Having a volunteer of the year award is important for me.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

7. Receiving a verbal thank you from staff is important for me.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

8. Helping make the community a better place is important for me.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

9. Having a picnic with other volunteers and staff is important for me.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

10. Receiving a free t-shirt from ACCORD is important for me.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

11. Having volunteers acknowledgement promoted in newsletter is important for me.

- Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

12. Having an Annual Volunteer Recognition event is important for me.

- Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

13. Receiving a gift card from ACCORD is important for me.

- Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

14. Having free training and education opportunities is important for me.

- Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

IV. Satisfaction with Volunteer Experience

1. Were you satisfied with the initial training provided by ACCORD?

- Yes
 No

2. Are you satisfied with additional trainings provided by ACCORD?

- Yes
 No

3. Are you satisfied with your volunteer experience at ACCORD?

- Yes
 No

4. Do you plan to continue volunteering at ACCORD?

- Yes
 No

5. Have you ever thought about leaving ACCORD?

- Yes
 No

V. Background Information

1. Age:

- 18-24
 25-34
 35-44
 45-54
 55-64
 65 and older

2. Gender:

- Male
- Female

3. Employment Status:

- Student
- Employed full time
- Employed part time
- Unemployed
- Retired

4. Marital Status:

- Single
- Married
- Divorced
- Widowed

5. What is your highest level of education?

- Some High School
- High School Graduate
- Technical School Graduate
- Some College
- College Graduate
- Graduate School
- Postgraduate Degree

6. Race/Ethnicity:

- African-American
- Asian
- Hispanic-American
- White
- Other
- Prefer not to answer

7. What is your annual household income?

- Less than \$15,000
- \$15,000-\$29,000
- \$30,000-\$49,000
- \$50,000 or higher
- Prefer not to answer

Thank you.

Appendix D

Telephone Interview Instrument

Questions

1. What is your volunteer position (CASA volunteer or Volunteer Neutral)?
2. How long have you been volunteering at ACCORD?
3. Why did you decide to volunteer at ACCORD?
4. How satisfied were you with the initial training you received at ACCORD?
5. What do you like about ACCORD?
6. What you dislike about ACCORD?
7. Do you plan to continue volunteering at ACCORD? Why or why not?
8. What ACCORD can do differently to help you in your work?
9. Overall how satisfied are you with your volunteer experience at ACCORD?

Appendix E

Survey Responses

I. General Information

Type of Volunteer	Response Percent	Response Count
CASA Volunteer	37.0%	10
Volunteer Neutral	55.6%	15
Both CASA Volunteer and Volunteer Neutral	7.4%	2

Months or Years of Volunteer Experience	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than 6 months	0%	0
6 to 11 months	7.1%	2
1 to 3 years	35.7%	10
4 to 7 years	21.4%	6
8 to 10 years	3.6%	1
More than 10 years	32.1%	9

Average Time Spent Volunteering per Month	Response Percent	Response Count
1 to 3 hours	44.4%	12
4 to 6 hours	25.9%	7
7 to 9 hours	7.4%	2
10 to 12 hours	22.3%	6
More than 12 hours	0%	0

II. Reasons for Volunteering

	Motive	Average Score	Total Average Score
Values	10. I feel compassion toward people in need.	4.4	13.3
	11. I feel it is important to help others.	4.7	
	13. I can do something for a cause that is important to me.	4.2	
Understanding	8. Volunteering allows me to gain a new perspective on things.	4.4	12.5
	15. I can learn to deal with a variety of people.	4.1	
	18. I can explore my own strengths.	4.0	

	Motive	Average Score	Total Average Score
Enhancement	3. Volunteering makes me feel important.	3.5	10.8
	7. Volunteering increases my self-esteem.	3.7	
	17. Volunteering is a way to make new friends.	3.6	
Social	1. My friends volunteer.	3.0	9.4
	2. People I am close to want me to volunteer.	3.2	
	14. Volunteering is an important activity to the people I know best.	3.2	
Career	5. I can make new contacts that might help my business or career.	2.6	8.7
	9. Volunteering allows me to explore different career options.	3.0	
	16. Volunteering experience will look good on my resume.	3.1	
Protective	4. By volunteering I feel less lonely.	2.8	8.2
	6. Doing volunteer work relieves me of some of the guilt over being more fortunate than others.	2.7	
	12. Volunteering helps me work through my own personal problems.	2.9	

III. Reward Preferences

Statement	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Type of Reward
1. Receiving a certificate of appreciation is important for me.	23.3% (6)	50% (11)	22.7% (5)	Tangible
2. Receiving a thank you note from ACCORD is important for me.	13.6% (3)	40.9% (9)	45.5% (10)	Tangible
3. Feeling satisfied about my volunteer experience is important for me.	0% (0)	0% (0)	100% (22)	Intangible
4. Being able to use skills to help others is important for me.	0% (0)	4.5% (1)	95.5% (21)	Intangible
5. Having snack tables during volunteer meetings is important for me.	18.2% (4)	50% (11)	31.8% (7)	Tangible
6. Having a volunteer of the year award is important for me.	31.8% (7)	50% (11)	18.2% (4)	Tangible

Statement	Strongly Disagree/ Disagree	Neutral	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Type of Reward
7. Receiving a verbal thank you from staff is important for me.	9.1% (2)	9.1% (2)	81.8% (18)	Intangible
8. Helping make the community a better place is important for me.	0% (0)	0% (0)	100% (22)	Intangible
9. Having a picnic with other volunteers and staff is important for me.	9.1% (2)	50% (11)	40.9% (9)	Tangible
10. Receiving a free t-shirt from ACCORD is important for me.	59.1% (13)	31.8% (7)	9.1% (2)	Tangible
11. Having volunteers acknowledgement promoted in newsletter is important for me.	13.6% (3)	77.3% (17)	9.1% (2)	Tangible
12. Having an Annual Volunteer Recognition event is important for me.	18.2% (4)	40.9% (9)	40.9% (9)	Tangible
13. Receiving a gift card from ACCORD is important for me.	68.2% (15)	27.3% (6)	4.5% (1)	Tangible
14. Having free training and education opportunities is important for me.	0% (0)	13.6% (3)	86.4% (19)	Tangible

IV. Satisfaction with Volunteer Experience

Satisfied with Initial Training	Response Percent	Response Count
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Yes	93.3%	26
No	3.7%	1

Satisfied with Training Opportunities	Response Percent	Response Count
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Yes	88.5%	23
No	11.5%	3

Satisfied with Volunteer Experience	Response Percent	Response Count
--	-------------------------	-----------------------

Yes	96.2%	25
No	3.8%	1

Intend to Continue Volunteering	Response Percent	Response Count
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Yes	100%	27
No	0%	0

Thought about Leaving ACCORD	Response Percent	Response Count
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Yes	51.9%	14
No	48.1%	13

V. Background Information

Age	Response Percent	Response Count
18-24	0%	0
25-34	7.4%	2
35-44	0%	0
45-54	14.8%	4
55-64	33.3%	9
65 and older	44.4%	12

Gender	Response Percent	Response Count
Male	36.0%	9
Female	64.0%	16

Employment Status	Response Percent	Response Count
Student	3.7%	1
Employed full time	22.2%	6
Employed part time	18.5%	5
Unemployed	3.7%	1
Retired	51.9%	14

Marital Status	Response Percent	Response Count
Single	15.4%	4
Married	53.8%	14
Divorced	23.1%	6
Widowed	7.7%	2

Highest Level of Education	Response Percent	Response Count
Some high school	0%	0
High school graduate	7.4%	2
Technical school graduate	0%	0
Some college	11.1%	3
College graduate	25.9%	7
Graduate school degree	40.7%	11
Postgraduate degree	14.8%	4

Race/Ethnicity	Response Percent	Response Count
African-American	0%	0
Asian	0%	0
Hispanic-American	0%	0
White	88.9%	24
Other	3.7%	1
Prefer not to answer	7.4%	2

Annual Household Income	Response Percent	Response Count
Less than \$15,000	3.7%	1
\$15,000-\$29,000	0%	0
\$30,000-\$49,000	25.9%	7
\$50,000 or higher	44.4%	12
Prefer not to answer	25.9%	7