



WHITE PAPER

Strategies to improve **volunteer engagement** in hospitals and healthcare charities

Take a look at how hospitals and healthcare charities are recruiting, engaging and retaining their volunteers to deliver the best patient care and meet fundraising targets.

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This whitepaper aims to equip hospitals and healthcare charities with the knowledge and tools needed to **enhance their volunteer programs**, ultimately leading to better outcomes for both volunteers and patients.

Executive Summary

Volunteer engagement in healthcare is vital for system effectiveness, especially amidst workforce challenges like staff shortages, skill-mix imbalances and resource inefficiencies.¹

This whitepaper outlines strategies to enhance volunteer engagement, addressing retention barriers and the need for robust management systems that align with national standards. Rosterfy's platform facilitates these strategies by offering tools for efficient volunteer management, aiming to help healthcare leaders improve engagement and system resilience.

Introduction

Volunteers provide the essential support that complements the work of medical professionals, especially in areas where medical care would otherwise be unattainable. From assisting with patient care to supporting administrative functions and raising funds for vital research, volunteers enable healthcare facilities to operate more efficiently and deliver high-quality care.

However, managing a volunteer workforce in a healthcare setting comes with unique challenges, including balancing patient care with recruiting, training and retaining volunteers amidst broader workforce constraints and regulatory demands.

Especially in areas where healthcare professionals are in short supply, volunteers fill critical gaps, such as in remote and rural regions. However, healthcare organisations often struggle with finding volunteers who have the available time and commitment required, as well as those who meet specific requirements, such as vaccination status.²

These challenges are exacerbated by the fact that almost one in three³ respondents in a recent survey weren't even aware of the [National Standards for Volunteer Involvement](#), which are designed to guide best practices in volunteer management.

This whitepaper aims to address these obstacles by providing a comprehensive overview of strategies to improve volunteer engagement in healthcare settings. We will explore the barriers to volunteer recruitment and retention, the importance of aligning volunteer management practices with national standards, and the role of effective volunteer management systems.

By doing so, we hope to equip healthcare organisations with the knowledge and tools needed to enhance their volunteer programs, ultimately leading to better outcomes for both volunteers and patients.





Enhancing operational efficiency with a centralised system

In many healthcare environments across Australia, patients face longer waiting times and higher out-of-pocket costs, particularly in private hospitals, where access to specialised services can come at a premium. These challenges highlight the critical need for support within hospitals and healthcare charities. While volunteers can't alleviate the financial burden, they can help ensure that patients receive the support they need while in care. They're also pivotal to raising awareness and funds that can support groundbreaking research and new treatment options.

However, for hospitals and medical organisations in particular, it can be challenging to find committed long term volunteers.

While organisations are aware that they need to do more to engage and retain their volunteers (including Gen Z volunteers), the task of implementing the technical infrastructure can seem daunting. Budget is also often a consideration, where managers need to justify the ROI of investing in technology, not only to improve operations but to enhance the overall volunteer experience.

A centralised volunteer management system such as Rosterfy offers significant benefits to healthcare organisations, transforming how they manage and engage their volunteer workforce. By consolidating all volunteer-related activities into one platform, healthcare facilities can streamline processes, improve communication and ultimately enhance the overall efficiency of their operations.



Sydney
Children's
Hospitals
Foundation

Benefits of a centralised volunteer management system (VMS): Sydney Children's Hospitals Foundation

One of the primary advantages of a centralised system is the ability to manage large volumes of volunteers efficiently. For instance, Sydney Children's Hospitals Foundation (SCHF), which relies on nearly **7,000 dedicated volunteers**, leverages Rosterfy to coordinate its efforts, ensuring that each volunteer is aligned with the foundation's mission to support sick children and their families.

In the past 12 months alone they have raised over **\$100 million dollars** for the foundation, almost entirely through volunteers with multiple events running simultaneously. Having the transparency of knowing which volunteer is where and who is doing what has been essential to operating efficiently and delivering an engaging volunteer experience.

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Streamlining volunteer management processes

A centralised system like Rosterfy also streamlines the administrative tasks associated with volunteer management, freeing up valuable time and resources that can be redirected toward patient care and other critical activities.

By automating processes such as volunteer onboarding, training and compliance tracking, hospitals and healthcare charities can reduce the burden on staff and ensure that volunteers are well-prepared to contribute effectively.

Additionally, such systems enable real-time communication with volunteers, allowing for quick updates and efficient management of any changes in volunteer needs or schedules.



This gives volunteer managers or healthcare professionals the opportunity to display opportunities that match past involvements and volunteer skills. As a result, it's easier to involve volunteers in multiple opportunities and fill the recruitment gap many medical organisations face.



Ruth Leonard, Macmillan Cancer Support

Ruth Leonard of Macmillan Cancer Support advocated for a dynamic and adaptable approach to volunteer management,⁵ emphasising the importance of responsiveness and critical reflection. This strategy is well-supported by a centralised system that not only simplifies the management of day-to-day volunteer activities but also provides the flexibility to adjust practices as needed to better support volunteers and the healthcare environment they operate within.



[Listen to 'Going the extra mile for your volunteers' with Ruth on Rosterfy's, The Engaged Volunteer Podcast](#)



Examples of improved efficiency in healthcare settings

The impact of a centralised volunteer management system extends beyond administrative efficiency. In the wider context of healthcare operations, such systems contribute to overall operational effectiveness by ensuring that volunteer resources are optimally allocated and utilised.

For example, the increased access to digital health systems in Australia reflects a broader trend toward centralisation and data integration, with more than 80% of Australians willing to share their health data within a digitally enabled health system.⁶ This willingness highlights the growing acceptance of digital tools to improve healthcare operations, including volunteer management.

Furthermore, with nearly half of healthcare professionals in Australia reporting burnout,⁷ there is a clear need for systems that can reduce the operational burden on staff. Centralised volunteer management systems can ease the administrative workload associated with managing large volunteer programs, thus allowing healthcare workers to focus more on patient care and less on logistical challenges.



Implementing automatic onboarding to ensure compliance

Effective volunteer engagement begins with a thorough onboarding process that ensures compliance and safety, two critical components in healthcare environments.

Automatic onboarding with a tool like Rosterfy streamlines this process, ensuring that all volunteers are properly prepared before beginning their roles. That also means clearly communicating your mission and describing your expectations toward volunteers. By constantly asking yourself whether you've met all these requirements, you can ensure that applicants already identify with your goals.

Did you know?

VMS' like Rosterfy allow you to set up automated onboarding journeys that progress volunteers through a series of checkpoints to ensure thorough screening that ensures compliance.

From reference checks to interviews with integrations including Zoom and Microsoft Teams through to auto reminders for expiring credentials, **Rosterfy can automate 75% of your end to end workforce management journey.**

[Learn more](#)



Case Study: Children's Hospital Foundation

Prior to implementing Rosterfy, CHF was using manual processes including spreadsheets to manage their volunteer lifecycle. This was not only time-consuming and inefficient but also failed to deliver an engaging experience for their volunteers. Since adopting Rosterfy, CHF has significantly streamlined their processes with automations that are now replacing manual processes to enhance efficiency, improving reporting and ensuring compliance.

"Rosterfy's automations have made my life so much easier! I've gone from emails back and forth and populating data in spreadsheets to the whole process being automated. Not only is this a huge time saver but it's also ensured a more engaging and straightforward process for volunteers. A win-win for everyone!"

Ashleigh Corsetti, People & Culture Advisor, CHF

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Importance of thorough onboarding for compliance and safety

In healthcare settings, volunteers often interact directly with patients, including children, which necessitates a high level of awareness regarding safety protocols, patient confidentiality and the specific needs of the populations they serve.

Just as patients expect to be well-informed about their care and safety issues, healthcare organisations must ensure that volunteers are similarly well-prepared to deliver accurate and empathetic care information.⁸

Proper training during onboarding helps volunteers meet these expectations, reducing the likelihood of errors and enhancing the overall patient experience.





Steps involved in automatic onboarding

1

Application process

The first step is an efficient and user-friendly application process where volunteers can easily submit their information online.

2

Initial screenings and interviews

After the application, initial screenings and interviews can be automatically scheduled, helping to assess the suitability of candidates for specific roles.

3

Credential and background checks

Volunteers must undergo thorough credential and background checks to ensure that all legal and safety standards are met promptly.

4

Working With Children Check (WWCC)

Particularly in environments like children's hospitals, it's essential to confirm that volunteers have a valid WWCC.

5

Signing of waivers and legal documents

Finally, volunteers are required to sign necessary waivers and legal documents, ensuring that all legalities are handled before they begin their duties.

Rosterfy comes with dedicated features to tackle each of these phases, from rule-based screening and volunteer segmentation to skill-based training modules and progress tracking. That way, healthcare professionals can focus on the work that matters most without worrying about expired background checks.



British Heart Foundation

Reducing the application process admin: British Heart Foundation Case Study

Prior to Rosterfy being introduced to the British Heart Foundation, 'MyVolunteer', the application process had 54 steps with an estimated 54% of these being redundant after Rosterfy.

It was estimated that it previously took an average of 42 days for someone to start volunteering with BHF, this was **reduced to 21 days** because of the operational efficiencies introduced by Rosterfy.

Through optimising the process for both volunteers and the administrative staff, Rosterfy enables BHF to lower dropout rates and increase commitment to their mission.

[**LEARN MORE**](#)

Utilising smart scheduling to optimise volunteer placement

Smart scheduling is a powerful tool for optimising volunteer placement, ensuring that volunteers are not only available when needed but also engaged in roles that align with their skills and profiles.

For younger volunteers especially, learning about mentorship programs and personalised development plans early on is a great motivator that can drive long-term engagement. So fine-tuning their journey with skill-based modules and a personalised schedule can help retain them from day one.

Understanding your volunteers' motivations

The first step in smart scheduling is gaining a deep understanding of volunteers' interests, credentials and availability. This information allows healthcare organisations to match volunteers to roles that are most suited to their strengths, leading to higher satisfaction and retention rates.

Empowering administrators to work more efficiently using technology

Automation plays a key role in smart scheduling. Rosterfy's platform, for instance, uses advanced algorithms to automate the scheduling process, taking into account each volunteer's availability, skills and preferences. This reduces the time and effort required to manage schedules manually, ensuring that volunteers are placed where they are needed most, without overburdening staff.

Ensuring a consistent volunteer experience

Moreover, smart scheduling can ensure consistent volunteer experiences across multiple venues or departments. With a centralised account system, volunteers don't need to upload their information multiple times, making it easier for them to participate in various roles within the organisation.

Creating engagement through personalised experiences

Personalised experiences are key to fostering strong volunteer engagement. By tailoring interactions and recognition to individual volunteers, healthcare organisations can significantly boost satisfaction and retention.



Tailored training programs

Customising training programs to meet the specific skills of volunteers ensures they're well-prepared for their roles. This not only boosts their confidence, but also enhances their effectiveness in their positions. Comprehensive training programs should cover all aspects of the volunteer role, from basic orientation to more specialised skills training.

Establishing two-way communication channels

Open and regular communication is essential for addressing the needs and concerns of volunteers. Two-way communication channels allow volunteers to share feedback and feel heard, fostering a stronger connection with the organisation. Healthcare organisations should establish multiple channels for communication with volunteers, including email, phone and online portals.

Celebrating milestones

Celebrating milestones such as birthdays, anniversaries and completed volunteer hours is a powerful way to show appreciation. With Rosterfy, this can be done through small gestures like sending personalised messages or organising events to celebrate achievements.

Reward and recognition programs

Implementing reward and recognition programs can motivate volunteers by acknowledging their contributions. Whether through formal awards or informal recognition, these programs reinforce the value that volunteers bring to the organisation.

Volunteer portals

With Rosterfy, organisations can easily provide volunteers with access to a personalised portal where they can find news articles, links to social media and other relevant content helps keep them engaged and informed.

When volunteers feel that their contributions are recognised and valued, they are more likely to stay committed to the organisation. Personalised experiences not only increase satisfaction but also lead to higher retention rates, as volunteers develop a stronger connection to the organisation and its mission.

Did you know?

Rosterfy are skilled specialists in volunteer management and engagement.

To learn more about how you can better engage and retain your volunteers through [communications](#), [reward and recognition](#), [training](#) and dedicated [volunteer portals](#), take a look at our [website](#).



Recruiting the next generation of volunteers

Attracting younger volunteers keeps your mission and ideas fresh and protects the long-term sustainability of your volunteer program. This generation values flexibility, meaningful engagement and the integration of technology in their volunteer experiences. To make healthcare volunteering more appealing to younger individuals, organisations can implement the following strategies:

Offer flexible volunteering opportunities

Younger volunteers often balance education, work and personal commitments. Offering short-term, project-based roles or remote opportunities can attract those eager to contribute but unable to commit to traditional, long-term roles.

Enhance the volunteer experience through technology

The Rosterfy volunteer management app provides a user-friendly platform that appeals to tech-savvy younger volunteers. Features like mobile check-ins, real-time updates and digital training keep volunteers connected and engaged.

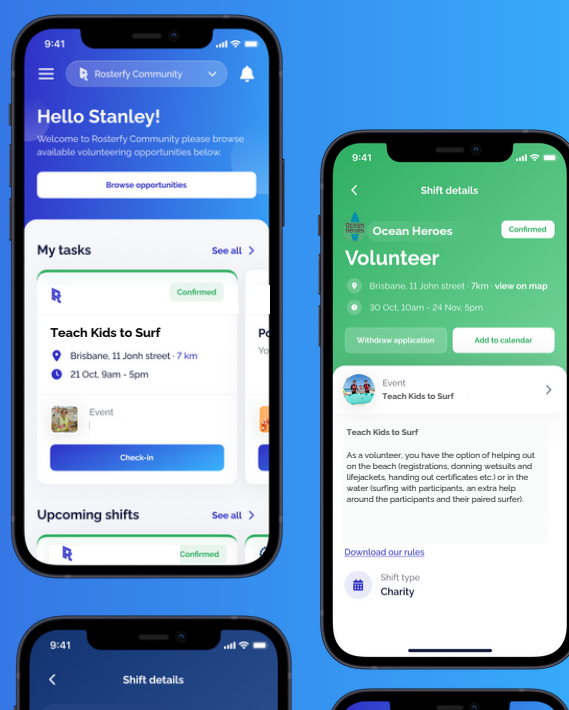
Create opportunities for skill development

Younger volunteers are motivated by opportunities for skill development and career growth. Offering mentorship programs, personalised development plans and skill-based assignments can make your program more appealing to this demographic.

Check out Rosterfy's Volunteer App!

Rosterfy's new mobile volunteer app, reimagines the volunteer experience to ensure better connected communities worldwide.

[LEARN MORE](#)



It's crucial to frame those opportunities in a way that doesn't come off as superficial, though. While Gen-Z is looking for digital-first experiences, those experiences still have to meet their everyday interests and worries. For this generation in particular, the cost-of-living crisis is always front of mind, which means that organisations who offer skill development and frame that opportunity as a path to employment stand a better chance to engage younger volunteers.

Of course, you'll encounter different groups of people within Gen-Z that will care more about other details like your ecological footprint or mental health. Drafting targeted messaging to speak to each of these ensures you're aware of volunteer needs and can tailor your program to turn them into loyal advocates.

Once those strategies are in place, healthcare organisations can tap into technology to create more meaningful long-term engagement. One way to achieve this is through Rosterfy's volunteering app, which creates the seamless experience for your community which digital natives expect.



Measuring ROI to understand the impact of your volunteer program

Measuring the return on investment (ROI) of volunteer programs is essential for understanding their impact and making informed decisions about future investments.

Healthcare organisations should regularly measure the impact of their volunteer programs to assess their effectiveness. This includes tracking both quantitative and qualitative metrics to gain a comprehensive understanding of the program's value.

Key performance indicators (KPIs) for volunteer programs include:

- Hours volunteered.
- Number of services provided.
- Volunteer retention rates.
- Engagement rates across tailored campaigns.

These metrics provide a clear picture of the program's reach and effectiveness.

Quantitative metrics, such as the total number of volunteer hours and the number of patients served, are important for understanding the scale of the volunteer program. These metrics can be used to demonstrate the program's impact on stakeholders and justify continued investment.

Qualitative metrics, such as volunteer satisfaction and patient feedback, provide insights into the program's quality. These metrics help healthcare organisations understand how well the program is meeting the needs of both volunteers and patients.

Tools like Rosterfy offer features for tracking and reporting on the ROI of volunteer programs. These tools automate the collection and analysis of data, making it easier for organisations to monitor the performance of their programs and make data-driven decisions.

Best practices for secure data storage include:

- Using encryption.
- Implementing access controls.
- Regularly auditing data security measures.

These practices help prevent unauthorised access to sensitive data and ensure that healthcare organisations remain compliant with data protection regulations.

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Ensuring data security and compliance

Data security and compliance are critical concerns in volunteer management, especially in healthcare settings where sensitive patient information is involved.

Protecting the privacy and security of volunteer data is essential for maintaining trust and ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory requirements. Healthcare organisations must implement robust data security measures to safeguard volunteer and patient information.

Rosterfy is one of the only volunteer management systems that offers local data hosting within Australia, ensuring compliance with local data protection regulations. This feature is particularly important for healthcare organisations that handle sensitive data and must adhere to strict data security standards.



Conclusion

Improving volunteer engagement in hospitals and healthcare settings requires a combination of strategies, from implementing automatic onboarding processes to utilising smart scheduling and creating personalised experiences for volunteers. Each of these strategies plays a crucial role in enhancing the volunteer experience and ensuring the success of volunteer programs.

Rosterfy is uniquely positioned to support hospitals and healthcare organisations in implementing these strategies. With its comprehensive suite of features, Rosterfy helps organisations streamline volunteer management, improve compliance and ultimately create a more engaged and effective volunteer workforce.

To learn more about how Rosterfy can support your organisation, we invite you to book a demo and see firsthand how our platform can help you achieve your volunteer management goals.

About Rosterfy

Rosterfy is the platform of choice for hospitals and healthcare charities that want to build engaging programs whilst streamlining compliance for their volunteers.

Provide your hospital with the resources that they need to engage with your volunteer community and give your patients the best possible care.

[Get in touch with our team today to learn more about how Rosterfy can help you.](#)

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