

Analysis on the Incentive Mechanism of Volunteers in China

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Abstract. As the importance of the volunteers' in China improves, as well as the cause of increasing the number of volunteers, the incentives of the volunteers become more and more important. This paper analyses how to motivate the potential of the volunteers', how to elevate the quality of the voluntary service and how to make the volunteers satisfied. This paper also recommends some methods to incentive the volunteers and hopes to provide a reference for the future voluntary services.

1. Introduction

“The smile of volunteers is the best business card in Beijing!” With the convening of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games and Paralympics, the term volunteers is gradually becoming familiar, and people are beginning to pay attention to this group that has been paying in obscurity around us. Disaster relief, international competitions, and rural support, we are seeing this group of people in more and more activities. Chinese volunteer business has just started, and many volunteer-related protection measures are still not in place. Therefore, how to motivate this special group is crucial to the construction of volunteers in China.

2. The Meaning of Volunteer

2.1. The Concept of Volunteer

At present, there is no unified explanation for the concept of volunteers in the academic world, but their claims have certain commonalities. According to the “Regulations on the Promotion of Volunteer Service in Beijing”, volunteers refer to those who voluntarily provide services and help to the society and others by using their own time, skills and other resources for the purpose of material compensation. According to the “China Youth Volunteer Registration Management Measures (Trial)”, volunteers refer to people who do not provide material services, help and support for society and others based on their conscience, beliefs and responsibilities. Richard Pound (1999) argues that volunteers are those who are not subject to legal and other forms of compulsory and voluntary service.

From the above statement, we can see that although the opinions of various scholars are different, the connotation of understanding of volunteers is consistent, that is, “not to return, voluntary participation”. In general, volunteers refer to people who provide help and services to society and others voluntarily and without compensation for the purpose of material compensation.

2.2. The characteristics of volunteer

Unpaid is the most essential feature of volunteers. The reason why volunteers are called volunteers is because the labor they pay is unpaid and not paid. The purpose of their services is

not to get paid. Of course, the reward here mainly refers to the money, material or other visible rewards that are not accepted for purchasing labor. It is not that volunteers should be “free labor” or even “posted money”.

Volunteering is another basic feature of volunteers. Volunteers participate in voluntary service activities on a voluntary basis. No one or organization may force or threaten others to participate in volunteer service activities. Volunteers are free to decide whether to participate in activities, when to participate in activities, and when to withdraw from activities. Volunteer organizations mainly play the role of communication, guidance and organization, unlike other organizations that have restrictions and management.

Volunteer service activities have a wide range of influences, in large part because the general volunteer service activities do not have special requirements for volunteers, so the scope of volunteers is quite extensive. Not limited to age, gender, no occupation, no qualifications, as long as there is love and willingness, you can participate in volunteer service and become a glorious volunteer.

Volunteers are different from other fixed identities and occupations. They are a very mobile identity and are related to the volunteer's occupation, personality, hobbies, and mental state. Anyone can choose to be a volunteer or a volunteer. The volunteers who participate in the volunteer service can choose to participate in the volunteer service at any time and withdraw from the volunteer service at any time. No one can force it.

3. The Importance of Volunteer Motivation

3.1. Appropriate Incentives Can Increase the Number of Volunteers

Although a series of activities such as the Beijing Olympics, Paralympics, and Wenchuan Earthquake have recruited a large number of volunteers, the proportion of volunteers in China is still relatively low compared with the total population of China, far less than the developed countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom. This is largely due to the lack of volunteer incentives. Volunteers often fail to get anything after they participate in activities. Some of them cannot meet their psychological needs. The number of volunteers participating in volunteer service is naturally small.

3.2. Appropriate Incentives Can Improve the Quality of Volunteer Service

Since volunteer service is a kind of unpaid work, even if the quality of volunteer service is not too high, these volunteers are relatively easy to get the forgiveness of most people. However, in this case, volunteer service does not play its due role in essence, which is partly due to the lack of incentives for volunteers. Many volunteers believe that the service is free, so there is a lack of attention and attention to the quality of the service.

4. Volunteer Incentives Exist

4.1. Lack of Motivation

Some people unilaterally believe that because the services provided by volunteers are unpaid, volunteers are a kind of “cheap labor”, and even more people think it is “free labor”. In their eyes, volunteers are a group of recruits who come and go, just need to provide a small amount of free, unpaid labor, such as transportation expenses, meals, and other necessary subsidies.

4.2. Incentive Means is Limited

As we all know, among many incentives, money and material incentives are the most basic and most effective incentives. However, because the labor paid by the volunteers is free and unpaid, we lose a very powerful means in the incentives, which creates great obstacles and difficulties for the incentives.

4.3. Volunteer Motivation is Complicated

The motivational diversity of volunteers participating in volunteer service activities is obvious. Some people participate in volunteering simply because they want to give love to others, some people want to meet new people, and some people want to get psychological satisfaction from helping others. However, the incentives cannot be relatively uniform, and there is no way to satisfy the different needs of volunteers.

4.4. Incentive is Unfair

The effectiveness of volunteering is very difficult to measure, and we have no way to assess the work of volunteers through a general performance appraisal mechanism. Therefore, rewards for volunteers can only be determined by the observation of the organizer, the evaluation of other volunteers, and the performance of the client. However, because these indicators are not objective enough and subjective, it is difficult to achieve fairness.

5. Suggestions and Countermeasures for Volunteer Incentive Mechanism

5.1. Accelerate Volunteer Legislation

The protection of volunteers is the most basic incentive for volunteers. As a volunteer, their primary need is to protect their basic personal safety when doing volunteer service activities. At present, there is no special legislation on volunteers in China. No matter whether it is a volunteer organization or a volunteer, there is no good protection mechanism. Whether it is the protection mechanism of volunteers or the incentive mechanism of volunteers, corresponding laws should be established. Only by raising the volunteer career to the height of the law can we fundamentally improve the importance of volunteers, and the protection and incentives of volunteers can be truly achieved, and the most basic needs of volunteers can be truly satisfied. Accelerating the relevant legislative work of volunteers can enable volunteers to clarify their rights and obligations, so that volunteers can clearly define their own responsibilities in the process of volunteering and effectively protect their own interests.

5.2. Expand the Scope of Volunteer Promotion

Chinese volunteer business has gradually entered people's field of vision after experiencing a series of large-scale activities, but people's understanding of volunteers is relatively small. Volunteers are sometimes not only unable to be satisfied, but also subject to great psychological pressure, which is extremely unfair to volunteers. Therefore, we must promote volunteers on a larger scale, so that we can not only deepen the understanding of the volunteers in the society, resolve the misunderstanding of the volunteers, but also create a better environment for volunteer service. It is a great encouragement and encouragement for volunteers to let volunteers gain a sense of satisfaction and honor in the process of volunteer service and enhance their pride as a volunteer.

5.3. Appropriate Use of Material Incentives

Since volunteers are laboring free of charge, it seems strange to use material means to motivate them. Many people believe that since volunteer labor is selfless dedication and does not seek repayment, then it should not use material incentives and only use spiritual incentives. But the material incentives referred to here do not refer to material incentives such as general money. On the one hand, it refers to the transportation expenses, meals and other subsidies that volunteers deserve, volunteer clothes with activity logos, etc. On the other hand, it refers to appropriate material rewards for the recognition and reward of volunteers, such as medals, souvenirs, etc. of some activities. However, it should be noted that although material incentives can be used appropriately, the selection of prizes, the amount of subsidies, and the proportion of awards must be carefully selected and determined.

5.4. Introduce Competition as Appropriate

Because of the extensive nature of volunteers, many people think that volunteer service activities have no requirements for volunteers. After they become volunteers, they do not think that this is a glorious and difficult thing. Therefore, the competition mechanism can be appropriately introduced. When selecting volunteers, you can eliminate certain differences, let the participants feel that they have to work hard to become a volunteer, and cherish the opportunity to become a volunteer. They can also set up some local awards to recognize outstanding volunteers.

5.5. Introduce Competition as Appropriate

Some volunteer services are not like other activities, they are very boring. A volunteer who has been engaged in the same activities for a long time in a position sometimes makes the volunteers feel very bored. Therefore, whether it is the encouragement and care of superior leaders or the good communication and communication between colleagues, it is very beneficial to alleviate the negative emotions of volunteers, reduce the pressure of volunteers, and make volunteers more motivated.

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