

Viva la Volunteer!

Recruiting and engaging your IABC/BC volunteer team



British Columbia



Who are you?

- Communications professional
- Board member
- *Volunteer*

As an IABC/BC board member, you are responsible for attracting, selecting and retaining volunteers.

People just like you, working to build or maintain skills and support IABC/BC's objectives.

Why the fuss about volunteers?

Survey says...

- Members state that volunteer opportunities are one of the most important reasons they renew
- Almost 50% of respondents in our annual membership survey rated volunteer opportunities to be important, or very important

What's in it for you?

- Our volunteers drive and support initiatives that help engage communications professionals across B.C.
- Personal skill building: Supervising, managing project deliverables, engaging team members



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Presentation overview

- Attracting and recruiting volunteers
 - Defining the need/setting expectations
 - Recruitment process
- Engaging and retaining volunteers
 - Onboarding
 - Your volunteer management responsibilities as a director
 - Best practices for engaging your volunteer
 - When things go sideways
- Offboarding and end-of-term process
- Additional resources



A word about volunteer management...

Happy volunteers = Needs are met

Fulfilling a need:

- Understand your audience
- Communicating:
 - The organization's goals
 - Your portfolio's objectives
 - How you plan to accomplish these objectives
 - How your volunteer's work contributes to overall goals and objectives
- Review and measure during and at the end

Sound familiar? Many of us complete these steps as part of our day jobs as communications professionals.

Attract and recruit

So you have a project...



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Beginning the recruitment process



Start (early!)

Reach out to Volunteer Services on Basecamp in the Board project or directly by Basecamp Ping or email to discuss what tasks you are looking to complete and see if there is a similar job description available.

Position design

Volunteer Services confirms by email whether there is a recent job description. If no job description is available, you may be asked a series of questions to help volunteer services develop the job description.

Generating interest

Depending on the role, Volunteer Services may send content to Marketing and Communications to post and promote, or may reach out to select members. All applications will be directed to volunteers@iabc.bc.ca.

Starting the process

Defining and setting expectations early on in the board year can set you up for success!



Director

- What is this portfolio trying to accomplish?
- What tasks do we need help with?

Standardized position descriptions

All IABC/BC role descriptions follow a general template that aims to answer:

- What do we need people to do?
- What makes the role exciting?
- What will they get out of it?
- What is the time commitment needed?
- Can the role can be done remotely?



iabc.bc.ca

DIGITAL OPERATIONS and MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Position:

Social Media Manager

Purpose:

Are you an enthusiastic digital communicator who crafts creative social media content? Do you love engaging with communities online, and seeing your work go viral? Would you like to gain experience working on fresh campaigns, and with a range of teams? If so, then our Social Media Manager role could be the right fit for you.

Location:

This role can be carried out from any location in BC.

Responsibilities:

The Social Media Manager will work under the direction of the Director of Marketing & Communications, while communicating directly and collaborating with our team of Digital Strategists, as well as other portfolio leads.

In this role, you will be responsible for overseeing the activity on our social channels: Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn, ensuring that they align with IABC Brand Guidelines and social media best practices, whilst meeting the needs of the chapter leaders.

Key Deliverables:

- Manage requests for social media activity from portfolio leads
- Draft and schedule social posts across all channels
- Collaborate with the Director of Marketing & Communications to produce content strategies and tactics for campaigns
- Carry out reviews of our channels and other chapter channels to provide

Generating interest

Posting, promoting and the power of the direct ask



Volunteer

- What do I want to learn?
- What do I want to get out of the experience?
- What skills can I contribute to IABC/BC?

What motivates our volunteers?

Answer Choices	Responses	
I was approached by an IABC member or chapter leader	50.00%	11
I felt it was my turn to contribute to the success of the chapter	54.55%	12
To network and meet other professionals	77.27%	17
To help with my career move or job hunt	27.27%	6
To develop new skills	63.64%	14
I was approached by someone with IABC	0.00%	0
Total Respondents: 22		

Why aren't members volunteering?

Answer Choices	Responses
Amount of work and effort required is more than I can give	33.33% 12
No one has approached me	30.56% 11
I am too busy (job, family, other commitments)	50.00% 18
I was not aware that there were any volunteer opportunities	8.33% 3
I am willing to volunteer, but there has not been an opportunity that fits my interests and/or skills	25.00% 9
I just recently joined the chapter	16.67% 6
Total Respondents: 36	

The power of the direct ask

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Sometimes a direct ask says no...

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Interviewing and screening

Candidates

- Respond to social media posts
- Review job description on website
- Apply to volunteer services email or complete expression of Interest form

Volunteer Services

- Interview candidate and check if they are a member.
- Provide a recommendation by email to a director on the candidate and all resumes/interview notes for review.

Directors

- Director confirms within one week who their preferred candidate is (and let Volunteer Services know!)

Interviewing applicants: What do we ask?

1. How did you hear about us?
2. Why are you interested in volunteering?
3. What are you looking to learn?
4. How many hours per week are you able to commit?
5. Tell me about a time when...
 - Particularly for manager roles, we look for information on: time management, reliability, technical skills and whether they are a team player
5. What else can I tell you about the role, IABC or volunteering in general?

Engage and retain

We have a volunteer! Now what...?



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Your role and responsibilities

As a portfolio director, you will directly influence the volunteer experience, and ultimately, the volunteer's impression of IABC/BC. In the next few slides, we will discuss activities and steps you can take to support a positive volunteer experience.

This includes:

- Onboarding and setting expectations
- Regular check-ins
- Providing feedback
- Developing their skills
- Recognition

Onboarding

The first step to engaging and retaining your volunteer to enable them to deliver for the portfolio, and for IABC/BC.



Welcoming your volunteer



Volunteer Services

- Contact successful volunteer with offer
- Provide onboarding forms
- Welcome them to the IABC/BC network
- Connect the volunteer to the director via email

Director

- Welcome the volunteer and set a time to meet/discuss vision for the team
- Determine communications preferences
- Discuss tasks
- Set up a regular check-in time

Volunteer

- Complete forms
 - Connect with director
 - Get started on tasks provided
- TBC: Review welcome presentation/IABC 101

Check-ins

These short meetings are an opportunity to ensure the volunteer feels engaged in their role and can meet deliverables.

Key check-in dates

One month

After a month, volunteer services will reach out to volunteer and director separately to see how things are going. If the volunteer or director feels the role is not a good fit, we want to find another opportunity for them to contribute.

Three month/Mid-year

This is another opportunity for you to review how things are going, and provide constructive feedback as needed.

End of term

Celebrate successes and thank the volunteer for their work.

Discuss and confirm that volunteer experience was met.

Provide introduction to the incoming director as needed.

Scheduled one-on-one and team meetings

These one-on-one and team meetings can help to ensure your volunteers are engaged and will deliver for your portfolio.

Block regular time in your schedules for these meetings. If the workflow of your project requires more frequent one-on-ones, be sure to communicate those expectations to your volunteers ahead of time.

Meeting recommendations:

- At the *very minimum*, meet once every two weeks per month by email
- An in-person or phone meeting with the whole team should be scheduled at least once every month

Best practices for meetings and check-ins

- **Show empathy.** Volunteers are supporting the chapter in addition to their regular family and work commitments. Ask how their workload is and if there are any major projects coming up for them. This can help you gauge how much time they have to complete the tasks you have asked them to do.
- **Be curious.** Listen to your volunteer's progress, concerns and questions. Ask open ended-questions and provide ample opportunity for the volunteer to bring their questions and agenda items forward.
- **Be flexible.** You can prepare discussion points, but be flexible and adapt according to your volunteer's needs and agenda items.

Most importantly: Thank the volunteer for their time and efforts. They are helping to support IABC/BC in addition to their regular responsibilities.

Providing feedback

A quick guide to reviewing and discussing materials received or recapping an event.



How to provide effective feedback

Effective feedback is:

- **Timely** - Provide the feedback as close to receiving the materials or if at an event, seeing the behaviour/action.
- **Specific** - Tell the volunteer exactly what needs to be improved. Stick to the facts, provide examples and avoid ambiguity.
- **Focus** on observable behaviour or actions that the volunteer can change. If providing feedback on content, provide some resources or examples that the volunteer can use to learn from.
- **Actionable** - Provide suggestions or resources on how the volunteer can improve.

Tip: Try to start off and end with positive feedback. This will put the volunteer at ease and help them continue to feel engaged.

Developing their skills

Identifying and providing direction if your volunteer needs to improve skills

Coaching your volunteers

A part of your role as an IABC/BC director is engaging the volunteers on your team. This not only motivates your volunteers to help you complete the work you've assigned to them, but also supports IABC/BC's overall goal to engage members and provide a valuable experience for communications professionals in B.C.

The next few slides provide two examples you can use to help coach your volunteers and develop their skills.

Coaching example 1: Window of work approach

[Window of Work](#) for Engaging Volunteers:

- Use this tool as a way to get to know your volunteer's passions and talents, what they want to learn and what they are not interested in doing.
- You can provide the Window of Work handout in advance to your volunteer to complete and discuss at the next check-in meeting
- This method is best used along with a [coaching approach](#) to support volunteers with skill development.

Coaching example 2: GROW engagement model

- Goal - Support your volunteer to establish a specific, measurable, actionable, realistic, and time-bound (SMART) goal. Ask questions like:
 - What do you want to achieve?
 - How will you know that the problem or issue is solved?
- Reality - Ask your volunteer to describe their current reality. Useful questions can be:
 - What is happening now (what, who, when, and how often)?
 - Have you already taken any steps towards your goal?

Coaching example 2: GROW engagement model

- Options - Facilitate brainstorming to explore what's possible. Questions could be:
 - What is the most obvious thing to do? The easiest thing to do? What's an out-of-the box solution?
- Will - Help your volunteer establish the will to commit to next steps. Examples could be:
 - What will you do and when?
 - What could stop you moving forward? How will you overcome this?

Recognition

The power of gratitude



Director-led recognition

- Acknowledge volunteer successes publicly with your team and the Board, where appropriate
- Social media can also be an appropriate way to recognize your volunteer (and promote the value of IABC/BC)
- Your portfolio budget will include a small amount to support recognition for your team (e.g. coffee, small get-together)

Volunteer Services-led recognition

National Volunteer Week (April)

- Volunteer Services recognizes volunteers each year during National Volunteer Week in April. Typically this includes an email to volunteers from Volunteer Services and the IABC/BC president with a token of appreciation.
- We also encourage the use of social media to recognize their work and promote the value of membership during this week



When things go *sideways*....

Issues management 101: Prevention is key

- Proactive check-ins with your volunteer (i.e. similar to the ones that portfolio directors have with their board buddy) will help get ahead of any potential issues. Regular check-ins with volunteers help you identify concerns and resolve issues before they start.
- Remind volunteers that if the role is not a good fit for them, we can find new opportunities more aligned with their interests. Placing volunteers in roles that suit their strengths and passions is key to volunteer retention.

Help! My volunteer went MIA

- If you have reached out to your volunteer by email and phone and still have not heard back from them, this is a good time to discuss the situation with the Director of Volunteer Services. They can support you with troubleshooting and potentially follow-up one-on-one with your volunteer to assess the situation and determine the best course of action.

The end... (of the term)

Offboarding



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End-of-term Process

- For non-members:
 - At the end of the six-month non-member volunteer term, Volunteer Services will reach out to the volunteer to thank them for their work, inform them that their term is ending and provide information on how to become a member. The portfolio director will be cc'd on the email.
- For members:
 - Volunteer Services will reach out at the end of the IABC/BC board term (May/June) to check in and learn whether the volunteer is interested in continuing or joining another team.

Offboarding

Celebrating achievements and gathering feedback for improvement

Best practices for end-of-term discussion and review

- Start by celebrating the volunteer's achievements and recognize how their accomplishments contribute to IABC/BC's mission.
- For gathering feedback from the volunteer, some key questions to consider are:
 - Were you provided with the support and resources needed to implement your volunteer project?
 - How well do you feel your volunteer project helped you meet your career development goals?
 - How much do you feel your project contributed to the IABC/BC mission?
 - Are you interested in volunteering again? If so, what opportunities are you interested in?

Offboarding

- Once confirmed that the volunteer will not be continuing, Volunteer Services will:
 - Send the volunteer exit form to the volunteer to complete
 - Inform the relevant directors
 - Post a thank you to the Basecamp volunteer group
 - Remove the volunteer from Basecamp
 - Update the Master Contact List
- Encourage your volunteers to complete Volunteer Services' annual survey to gather feedback from current volunteers. This information helps inform the strategic plan for the following year.



Board resources

- Recruitment process
- Job descriptions
- Org chart
- Volunteer Application Form
- Volunteer Onboarding Form
- Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement
- Volunteer Exit Form



Additional reading

Articles referenced throughout the presentation and links to deeper dives are located in the notes below.