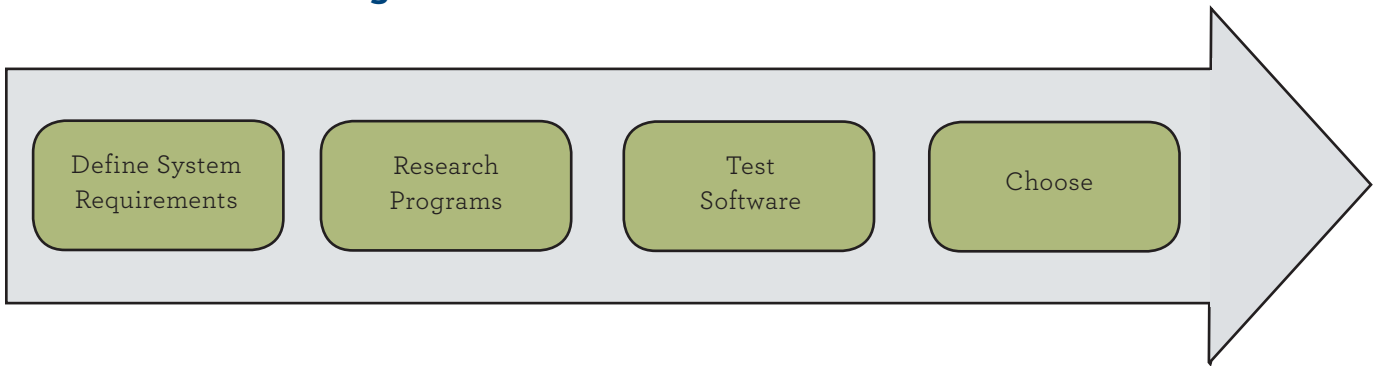


Section 9: Data Management

The Process of Finding Software That Works for You



9.1 Why Track Volunteer Data?

Tracking volunteer data is important for your organization’s future goals and your volunteer program for many reasons. By using a data management program you are not only able to track volunteer information and hours, but you are able to do so more accurately. By being able to provide accurate information to your organization’s board members, you will really be able to showcase the success of your program. This will also open the doors to more grant funding for your volunteer program, if you are able to provide reports, and numbers, then the opportunity to receive the grant may increase.

Additionally, a thriving database can serve as a viable volunteer recruitment tool. It also allows you to more effectively steward your volunteers. Finally, having an appropriate data base saves valuable time.

Watch now: Kyle Andrei from idealware, a company that helps nonprofits make smart software decisions, explains why you need volunteer management software.

9.2 Selecting a Volunteer Management System

Identifying a volunteer management system (VMS for our purposes) that works for your organization can be an extremely daunting and time-consuming task. Unfortunately, this is not an area where shortcuts are recommended...you need to do the leg-work here. The VMS you choose will have long-lasting effects on your organization’s ability to be efficient and effective when managing the priceless resource of volunteers. We recommend you employ the following steps as you make your selection:

1. Secure executive support
2. Identify system requirements (a system requirement is a functional task you want the system be capable of, for example automated reminders when a volunteer has a birthday, or a calendar and scheduling function).
3. Document Business Processes (I think we’ll want to define a business process here which is in the other materials I sent awhile back)
4. Research existing products
 - a. Basic online research
 - b. Technology conferences
 - c. Web demos with vendors
 - d. Site visits with other non-profits

5. Prioritize products based upon any of the following variables
 - a. Cost
 - b. Systems requirements
 - c. Alignment with business processes
6. Select two to three products that bubble to the top
7. Test business processes with each respective system. A lot of systems will let your try free trials for a period of time.
8. Test user behaviors with current volunteers or staff
9. Make your selection and host a demo with key stakeholders (IT, development, volunteer manager, key members of leadership, other users, etc.)

Note: The intent is not to endorse any of these programs. Only to provide options. In the process of finding a program that works best for your organization, it is important to research your options.

Tasks	Volgistics	Raisers Edge	Volunteer Spot	Volunteer2	CiviCore	Cervis	Volunteer Hub
Cost	\$80/month for 500 volunteers.	\$1,000's for Raiser's Edge; Additional \$700 for volunteer module	Free	\$995/one-time fee; \$525/year for 500 volunteers	Set-up fee plus \$200/month	Set-up fee plus \$25-175 month	Dependent on number of volunteers. Starting at \$69/month
Multi-site access, On-line access	Yes, through website	Access only through organizations server	Yes, through website	Yes, through website	Yes	Yes, through website	Yes
Security, Credibility	Secure, can set up according to staff roles	Secure, can set up according to staff roles	Secure	Secure, can set up according to staff roles	Secure	Secure, Different user access levels	Secure, admin. based on package
Track volunteers	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Volunteers can access information	Yes	No	Yes	Yes, shows other interests	Yes	Yes	Yes
Generate reports	Yes, set up for you	Yes, some set up others you need to create	Yes, export data into excel	Yes, set up for you	Yes	Yes	Yes
Email	Able to email all volunteers based on input	Can email with Net-Solutions + Rasiers Edge	Yes	Able to email all volunteers based on input	Yes, automatic set-up	Yes, automatic set-up	Yes, automatic set-up
Calendar	Yes	Yes, just dates/hours	Yes, multiple for events	Difficult to navigate	Yes	Yes	Yes

Please Note

Another important thing to note is that, while some programs may give you the option of using them for free, in the long run it will cost some amount of money to maintain and personalize a successful data management program.