GO UNITE

The Community of the Future

White Paper 2.0

ABSTRACT

There are 62.8 million volunteers in the US. The financial worth of their combined work hours is in the ballpark of $184 billion per year. (Cited). Volunteers are essential -- 1.5 million domestic nonprofit organizations could not function at all without them. Nevertheless, nonprofits struggle to properly manage this workforce, resulting in systemic financial loses and more importantly, losses in enthusiasm among volunteers.

Go Unite envisions an innovative system that combines modern tech with a unique project workflow, designed specifically to help nonprofits provide clear objectives for every volunteer. Preliminary tests of our tech/workflow hybrid provides instant instructions to volunteers, pulls daily nonprofit operations into focus, enables ongoing opportunity to collaborate among multiple nonprofits, and can *decrease* time spent on a nonprofit project as much as 70%, (compared to projects not using our system).

With your help, we can build a dynamic tool that will not only make the work of each brave volunteer less daunting… but will also revolutionize the entire nonprofit sector.

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The Volunteer/Nonprofit Dilemma

We observe that the "volunteer/nonprofit dilemma" breaks into two main parts: 1) conditions *inside* the nonprofit and 2) conditions *outside* the nonprofit. Conditions *inside* the nonprofit relate to organizational structure and practices, where conditions *outside* the nonprofit relate to prevailing social conditions. We explore these areas briefly in this section.

Inside the Nonprofit

Nonprofits have yet to find the perfect ratio of volunteers to paid staff. On the one hand, the nonprofit cause is bigger then the nonprofit -- thus everyone in the community should have the opportunity to help fulfill the cause. On the other hand, the organizations that relies too heavily on volunteers are at risk of being "amateurish" which has negative impact on the nonprofits public image, and, of course, day to do operations. (cited)

This directly relates to a more fundamental problem: internal organization and operations of nonprofits. Four of five nonprofits struggle with leadership and management issues and only 11 percent are prepared to scale for optimal impact, according to a new survey of more than 3,000 executives, staff, board members and donors. (Cited) These organizational issues radiate out into the volunteer pool.

Lastly, nonprofits struggle to incentivize paid staff who, in turn struggle, to incentivize volunteers. (cited) Ultimately, the nonprofit generally doesn't make it possible for staff and, to our point, volunteers to make their cause and community a number one priority. Nevertheless, they are solely responsible to compete with other nonprofits to find the funding to do so.

Outside the Nonprofit

1 out of 3 volunteers who volunteer in one year do not volunteer the next year. This is an external issue that has singularly plagued nonprofits since their conception. As we've observed, part of this issue is because jobs are often thankless, rewardless and ambiguous (cited).

Another massive aspect of this problem of volunteer retention is at the heart of a vast social trend. Author Robert Putnam suggests in his well-known work "Bowling Alone" that civic engagement, generally, has been on a slow decline ever since the invention of the television. In other words, society is changing and the nonprofit sector is generally helpless to this issue. It's simply too easy these days to stay at home and get lost in modern technologies.

Volunteer Workday, Clean Air Protectors 2018

The Volunteer/Nonprofit Solution

Improving Internal Conditions

Volunteers need a clear and concise understanding of what their role is. They need to know when they're done and what they get out of it in return. Go Unite does this exactly.

Go Unite is a project management software that is specifically designed for grassroots orgs, nonprofits, and local governments. Its' core feature is a project template creating/ sharing tool that allows for "instant organization" as well "open-source" style collaboration on projects among project admin, volunteers, and fellow NPOs. In theory, any one organization could create a project template then share it on the shared community "server" so that any participating nonprofit could customize and build on the template. (Though new versions of templates can be made without altering old ones.) To clarify, a *project template* is a step by step instruction that lays out the "who" and the "what" of **any** project (fundraiser, after school activity, art gallery show, festival, etc) -- the instructions can have a high level of detail or low level. It depends on the needs of a project. (This same template process -- in its most basic function --works perfectly well on paper in a limited capacity.) Example images below depict a *Template* and *Role*.

Last year in a session at the Utah Nonprofit Association (UNA) Conference, 15 NPO admins tested our concept on paper. Its results were very promising. In this test, a room

of strangers ran a miniature art competition with no managerial oversight and successfully iterated through any ambiguities in their instructions via creative thinking and collaboration with fellow volunteers-- by using only their given template instructions.

Importantly, the conference attendees improved their template instructions when they ran into problems. In our functioning system, each staff and volunteer is rewarded points for improving their job descriptions. This adds a new dimension of intrigue to otherwise routine volunteer roles.

Rewards: Points Redeemable for Goods and Services

Go Unite will implement its own cryptocurrency that ties into jobs as well as an online marketplace of goods and services. Essentially, a volunteer will be able to select a job, execute the job, be awarded a [1]cryptocurrency "point," then redeem that point for goods and services on an in app marketplace.

By making jobs more clear, interesting, and more rewarding we feel that we can address the major issues that make volunteers lose interest and stop volunteering. Furthermore, if this template creation system is integrated into the daily meetings of nonprofits, then it will help organize nonprofits internal operations in a new way.

Improving External Conditions (Nonprofits share jobs and templates)

As said, volunteers often arrive at nonprofits with great enthusiasm. However, they can disappear with equal enthusiasm and provide no explanation for their change in heart/ circumstances. This is simply the reality of the nonprofit world. However, by introducing module jobs that are clearly defined we transform this problem into an impactful solution.

Fundamentally, the more volunteers who participate in our system, the smarter, more clear and entertaining a volunteer job can be made. A volunteer, for instance, could show up once -- execute the job, suggest an edit, leave and never return -- but still have improved the instructions for the *next* volunteer.

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[1] Cryptocurrencies are known for their volatility. It is our assertion that we can protect against this issue by integrating our cryptocurrency into a work/goods and services ecosystem wherein actual value exists beyond just the trust of a new cryptocurrency.

Conclusion

In spite of all the current challenges, it is thankfully true that volunteers very frequently strive to make their nonprofits (and communities) better. (cited). It's crucial to observe and appreciate this fact in order to form an opinion on what we're presenting. Inspite of systemic imperfection in the nonprofit world, people still get involved -- and, in an inspiring amount of cases, they get the job done.

You could thus conclude that things are *okay* the way they are. We, on the other hand, conclude that given the right tools, nonprofits and community organizations could accomplish miracles.

Volunteer Planning Committee, UAA 2018

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