

Demystifying Working with Volunteers

Samantha Barr & Erin Spink

Learning Outcomes:

- understand your role as a staff partner to volunteers
- learn tactics for handling common challenges with volunteers
- develop tools to ensure success on both sides of the volunteer/staff relationship

Introductions – Who We Are



Samantha Barr
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Senior Manager, Volunteer Engagement
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2 Secrets to partnering with volunteers



Secret 1

FOREWORD BY SOMEONE IMPORTANT

THE ONLY
PROBLEM WITH
VOLUNTEERS...

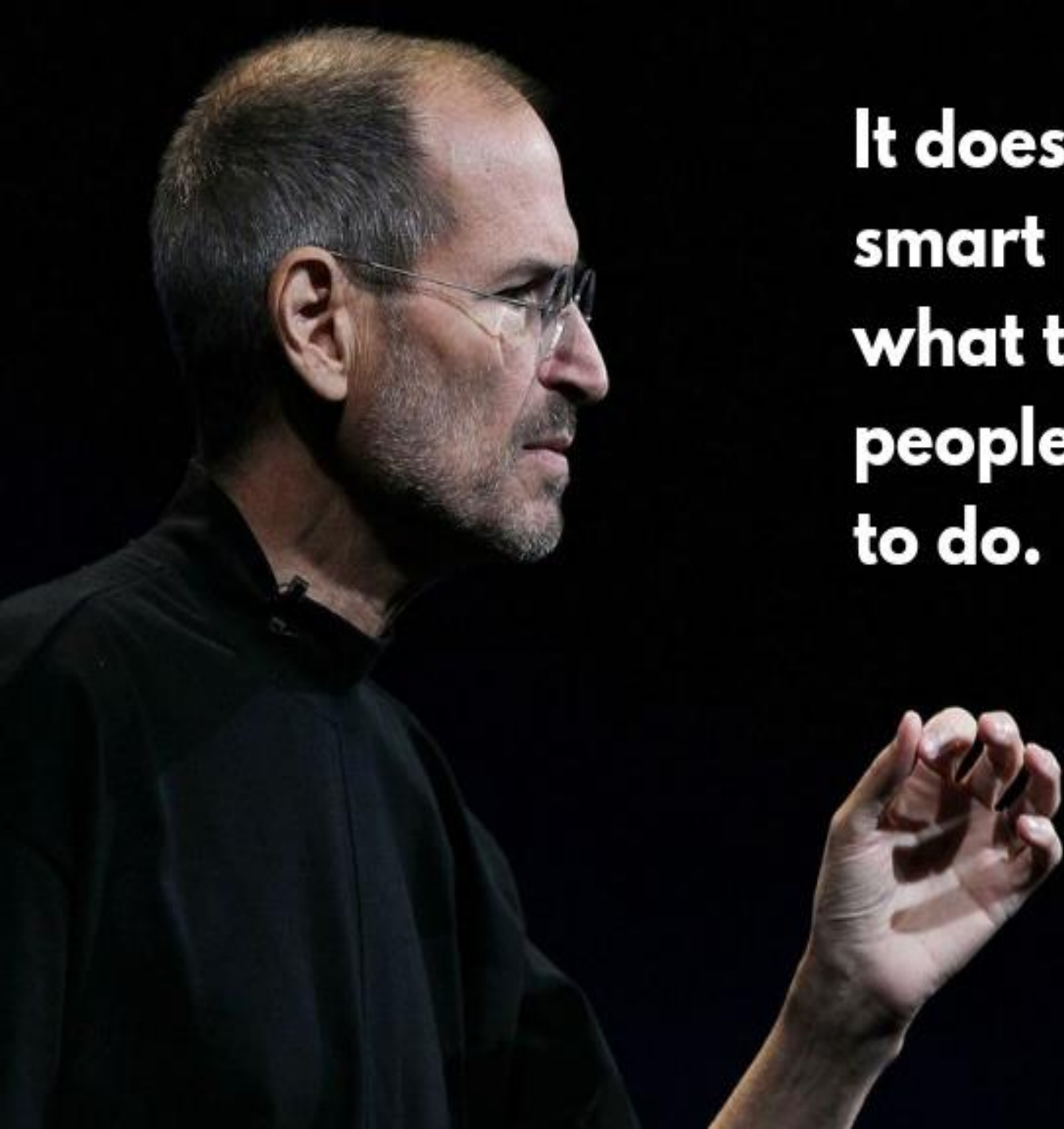


IS THAT THEY`RE
PEOPLE

BESTSELLING AUTHOR ERIN SPINK

Secret 2





It doesn't make sense to hire smart people and tell them what to do; we hire smart people so they can tell us what to do.

- Steve Jobs

**“BASIC
ASSUMPTION”**

The Importance of Volunteers

- How many volunteers do you have vs. staff?
 - CCS ratio is 150:1
- Are your programs delivered by volunteers?
- Volunteer engagement and giving
 - Your network, ambassadors and more likely to be donors or have soft-credit
- Volunteers bring authenticity
 - Allow staff to dedicate their time and focus on what they do best, while bringing in talent who are adding real value & they can often be the longer-term relationship holders
 - They can bring relationships and representation to key stakeholder groups
- Basic volunteerism stats
 - Ave 13M Canadians volunteer annually (age 15+)
 - Est. 55% of charities & non-profits are run entirely by volunteers



Who's Driving the Bus?

Common Challenges: Do any of these sound familiar?

- Managing expectations
 - Front end investment that needs to be made – e.g. training
 - Coming with enthusiasm, but not the context
- “Quicker to do it myself”
 - Don’t always have the time to bring volunteers up to speed
 - Preparing the work – parsing pieces of work to delegate takes time
- Working with a volunteer engagement partner
 - Maybe you don’t even have one!
 - Disconnect between the fundraiser and the VE partner
- Number of volunteers
 - Managing a team of people and having to manage those relationships
 - Volunteer committees
- Clarity on decision-making and roles and responsibilities
 - Who works for whom? Power structure
 - Volunteers may have a longer history than the fundraiser!
- The Badly-Behaved volunteer
 - You know (& whom) what we’re talking about!!!

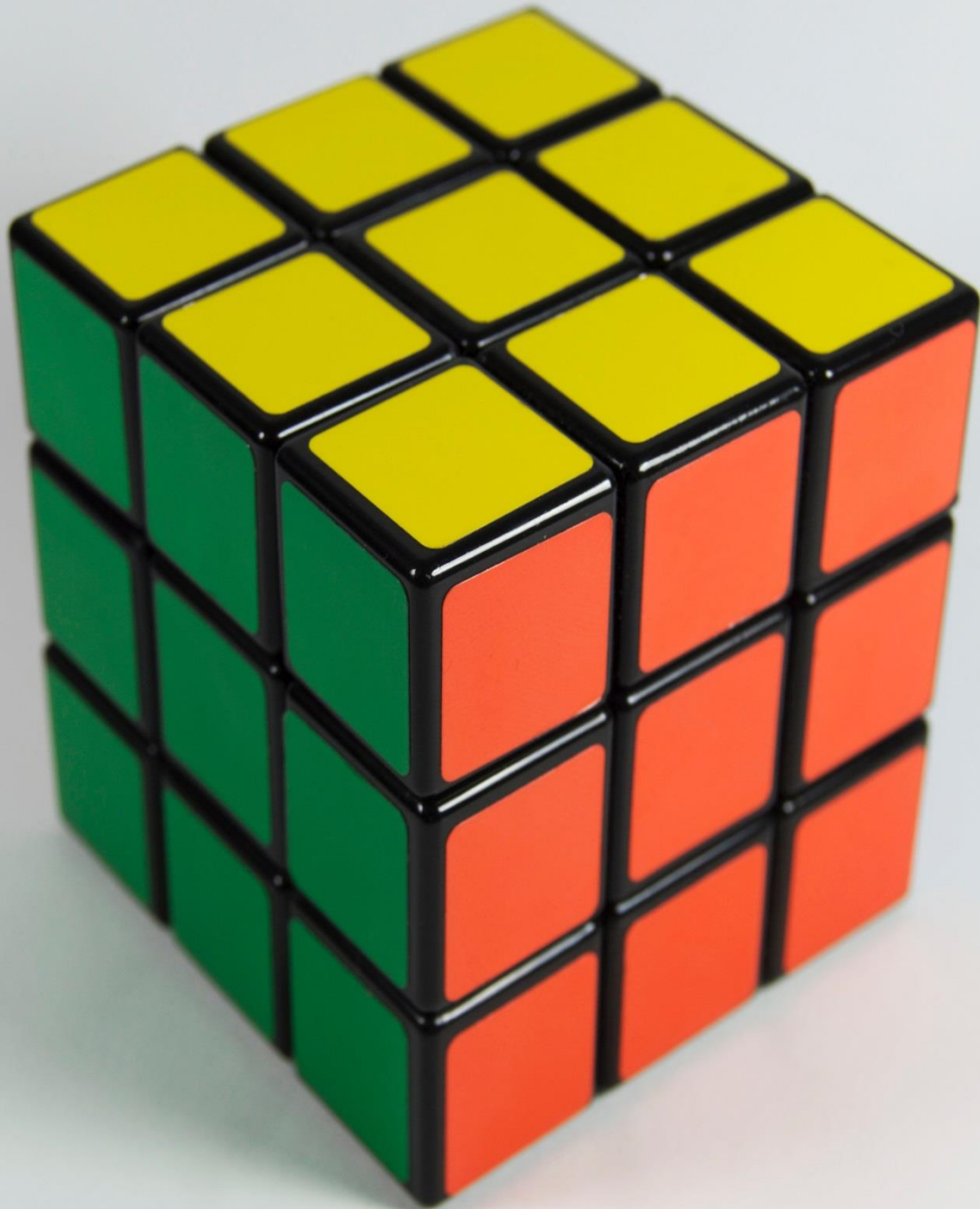
Exercise #1

What challenges have you experienced?

Discuss around your table

Use one of the examples provided or share your own!





Solutions

- Moving from being the “doer” to the “facilitator”
- Role descriptions or a project brief
- Asking “What do you want out of this?”
- Expectation management
 - Providing context, timelines, respecting volunteers’ time by providing prepared work and materials for them



Partnership Basics- Staff/Volunteer Relations

Understanding Your Role

- Volunteering is changing
 - Volunteers are sophisticated – they have high expectations
 - What are you asking volunteers to do?
- Partnership, a relationship that has to be managed
 - Thinking of volunteers as “time donors”
- How do you work with your other donors?
 - Share vision, identify ways they can help create that vision
 - Outline details, expectations, resources and be available for support
- You might not always have something for a volunteer to do!

Exercise #2

- Do any of these solutions help with the challenges you identified earlier?
 - If not, brainstorm some solutions that would fit



Sharing!

- What challenges did you discuss and what solutions did you identify?



Closing Reflection



- What did we learn today?
- What were your “aha” moments?
- What new ideas and tools are you walking away with?