

**They're not a frill if you're using  
them right:**

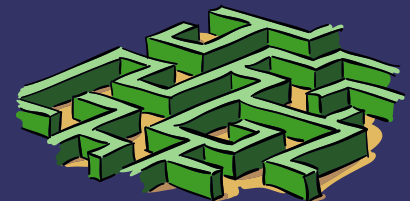
**How to save money and get more  
done using high-skill volunteers**

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# *Learning Objectives*

Participants will learn:

How to create projects for high-skill volunteers

How to supervise them

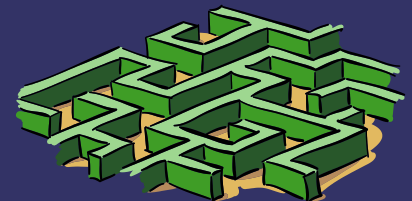
How to deploy them using the Big MAC:  
meaningful work, autonomy, collegiality



# I. What are high-skills volunteers good for?

## Major projects!

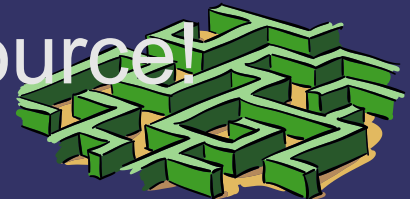
1. Think about mission/goals/strategic plan. Is “stuffing envelopes” at the top of the list?
2. If not, match skills required to achieve major goals to skills offered by volunteers.



# Supervision: Volunteer Coordinator vs. substantive staff

1. Volunteer coordinators have a hammer so everything looks like a nail.
2. The “hammer”: “get rid of these menial tasks” and/or “keep volunteers out of our hair.”

Must redefine volunteer coordinator's role:  
gateway to your most valuable resource!

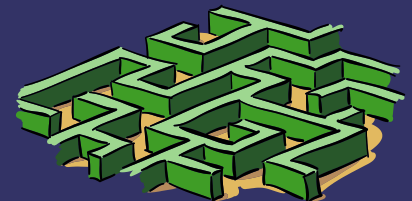


# D. The key: find projects, not tasks

The perfect solution to “orphan” projects

Aid to the overwhelmed

Analogy to use of Board of Directors



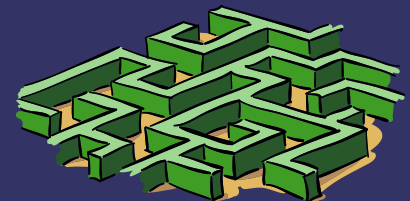
## II. How to identify major projects

### A. Essential:

1. Discrete tasks on which volunteers can make reasonable progress
2. Clarity about skills required

### B. Important:

Tasks which can be done independently

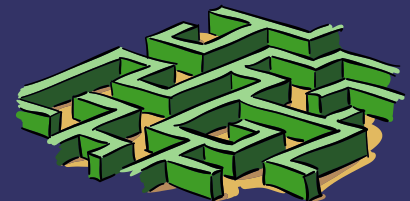


# *Audience thoughts*

What projects could you use volunteers for?

Do you have the right people to supervise those particular projects?

If not, how might you cope?



# III. How to integrate volunteers into those projects

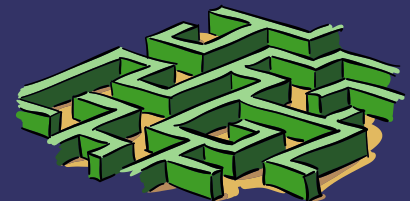
- A. Identify a volunteer leader
- B. Let them supervise other volunteers
- C. Hold them accountable for results





# IV. When to consider volunteers for leadership positions

- A. Prospective volunteer-leader must have significant and predictable time to give.
- B. They must have skills pertinent to project—define skills broadly!
- C. Board and/or committee service—why or why not?



# V. Smoothing relations between staff and volunteers

A. Identify the difficulties honestly

B. Recognize threat posed to paid laborers by free labor

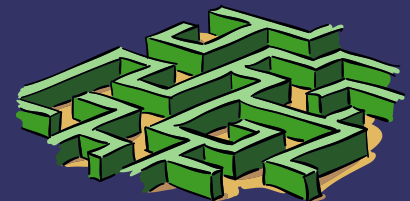
C. Clearly identify volunteer projects as “supplementary” and “complementary”



# Smoothing intramural relations, continued

D. Involve the whole staff in identifying  
volunteer projects

E. Discourage permanent-job ambitions  
among volunteers: life is not an audition!



# VI. What do high-skills volunteers need to get?

## The Big MAC:

A. Meaningful work

B. Autonomy

C. Collegiality



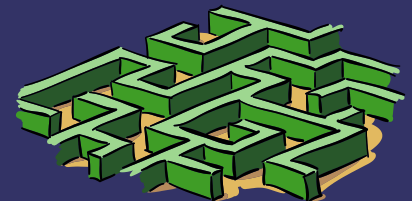
# The “M” in MAC

## Meaningful work

“Meaningful” equals:

1. is important to the organization
2. allows for use of one's skills—define skills broadly!

“Meaningful” NOT equals “You, nonprofit, give purpose to my wasted life.”



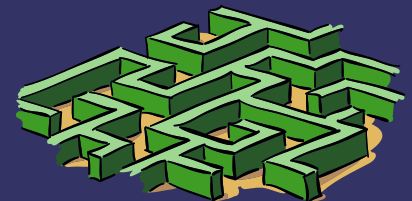
# *Audience thoughts, revisited*

Look at the projects you identified before. Are they meaningful?

Do they advance your mission?

Do they require the volunteer's skills?

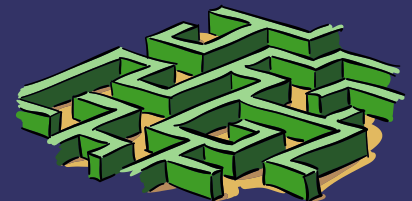
If not, how could you modify them to make them meaningful—to you and to them?



# The “A” in MAC

## Autonomy

1. Within the stated goals and timetable, the opportunity to organize one's own work.
2. Death by a thousand cuts: the risks of micromanagement.

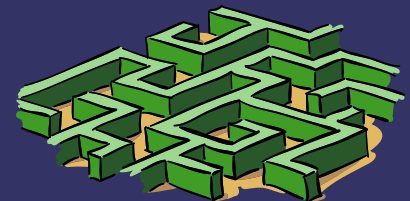


# The “C” in MAC

## Collegiality/community

Opportunity to belong to a team, to be included.

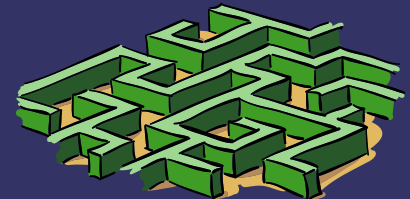
1. Creating a team—the importance of the volunteer-leader
2. Orientation and volunteer handbook
3. The importance of in-jokes





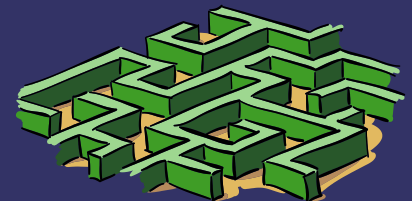
## VII. And what do we get?

- A. Enthusiastic experienced help
- B. A link to the community you may not get through your Board
- C. A long-term loyal donor!



# *Actionable Steps*

1. Refine your preliminary volunteer-projects list;
2. Discuss with volunteer coordinator
3. Discuss with program staff
4. Choose a single project on which to practice this new approach, based on ease of implementation (e.g., supportive staff, clear and finite goals)
5. Identify any recruitment needs



# *Key takeaways*

Volunteers should be given projects, not tasks

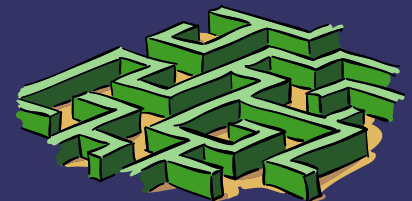
Volunteers need the Big MAC:

Meaningful work

Autonomy

Collegiality

Volunteers require effort but pay for themselves many times over!



# Questions? Comments? Concerns?

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