



VITA learning from ERA partnership

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VITA

BACKGROUND

Volunteering Initiative for the Third Age (VITA) commissioned the Employers' Retirement Association (ERA) in order to access the private sector through one channel rather than approaching individual companies. We hoped a relationship with ERA would be beneficial to introduce VITA to the members and pensioners they communicate with so they could introduce VITA to their contacts.

FINDINGS

Members of ERA liaise with their pensioners through welfare managers, who are in essence, volunteer managers. They are employed to look after the company's pensioners and so they would benefit from the same training as volunteer managers.

Their role is to coordinate pensioners or ex employees to volunteer for the large befriending schemes that they run for other retirees. This is a way of keeping in touch with employees who have retired from the companies. The role of the welfare managers varies greatly in different companies, along with their authority.

With the changing work environments, and more people moving from company to company to build their careers, it is likely that the role of welfare managers will lessen, due to the lack of longevity of service.

Unless a company is affiliated to you're a specific charity or looking for a charity to support, the welfare managers are unlikely to support a recruitment or fundraising campaign, as this support could be seen as competition for their existing charity. Also the pensioners are already busy acting as volunteers/befrienders for their old company. VITA does not regard using the welfare managers as a recruitment channel for volunteering organisation looking to increase their volunteer numbers.

VITA took the decision to work with one organisation for ease of access to the private sector. Working with an organisation as small as ERA and through an independent consultant did prove to be difficult. Better results and relationships were forged once an initial introduction to the company was made through the consultant. We believe that putting in a direct ask to welfare managers of individual companies would have been a more effective means of making contact with the private sector companies



CabinetOffice
Office of the **Third Sector**

VITA is a project funded by the Cabinet Office and co-ordinated by WRVS.