VOLUNTEERISM IN A CREATIVE ORGANIZATION:
FACTORS LEADING TO CONTINUING PARTICIPATION

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Abstract

The following is a study undertaken to look at an organization local to Minneapolis, Minnesota. The organization, Voltage: Fashion Amplified (VFA), offers a unique set of opportunities to the volunteer community. This study intends to look not only at this particular organization, but the volunteer community as a whole in order to best understand what brings an individual to an organization. From this one can better determine how to ensure the continued participation of said volunteer. In order to do this, a literature review examined research already done on the topic. A quantitative and a qualitative survey were performed on a set of individuals within VFA to derive meaning in their participation. Finally, conclusions are made regarding the results of the study and recommendations given regarding the future of the organization. In light of this study’s use as a partial fulfillment for a Masters at Adler Graduate School, an Adlerian commentary is included throughout the paper.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Presentation of the Organization

Voltage: Fashion Amplified is MNfashion’s premier event, held annually during Spring MNfashion Week. It seamlessly combines rock and runway into an intimate mix of sound and style. Four seasons of Voltage have brought thousands to its runway stage to see innovative fashions while listening to an eclectic set list from local musicians. Voltage’s fifth year will continue to be a sensory style experience at the First Avenue Mainroom in downtown Minneapolis on Friday, April 24th, 2009 (About Voltage, n.d.).

The preceding quote gives a general overview of the primary purpose of the organization known as Voltage: Fashion Amplified (VFA). Born in the mind of producer and creator, Anna Lee of Minneapolis, MN, VFA began in 2003 as a small collection of local minds were put to the task of creating a show not previously seen in the area. Bonded by the passion of Ms. Lee and a desire to do something new and creative, the team set to the challenge of collaborating, designing and organizing the efforts of the community to make this new show possible. The first year was blind and unsure, but determined and bolstered by the desire to manifest profits that would be donated to a local non-profit organization for the arts.

While the first year was, in retrospect, disorganized and clumsy, it began an organization that would become a well-oiled machine. In the subsequent 6 years, 5 shows would be successfully orchestrated and presented to the community. Today, VFA has a clear place in the fashion, entertainment and volunteer communities in Minneapolis. It has spawned many similar shows in the area, but is still considered one of a kind. It has also given Ms. Lee the ability to create another organization, MNfashion, now the parent organization of VFA. Today, the profits
of VFA go into supporting MNfashion as well as perpetuating the show itself. However, both organizations remain operated by a predominately volunteer crew.

**Mission Statement of the Organization**

“Voltage: Fashion Amplified is the Midwest’s premier rock and fashion show. Through its annual events, Voltage seeks to foster collaboration, engender community and unite music and fashion while providing a national forum for local talent” (*About Voltage*, n.d.).

MNfashion, the parent organization of VFA, adheres to a similar mission which also bleeds into VFA. “MNfashion is dedicated to providing resources and professional development allowing designers to establish a sustainable livelihood in Minnesota. In doing this, we foster community and encourage industry growth” (*About MNfashion*, n.d.).

**Historical Development of Organization**

Voltage: Fashion Amplified was created in a way in which both local bands and designers could be showcased simultaneously to produce an entertaining show. This manifested as a show where runway models presented fashion designs created for the show to the music of the live bands. The basic skeleton of the show has remained the same over the years, while the number of bands and designers involved has been altered.

As VFA gained momentum and success over the years, the number of people involved shifted through both necessity and reorganization. Some members have chosen different positions within the organization as others have used VFA as a platform to move on to new projects. There are, however, a handful of members that have remained with the organization since its inception.

Every year, the show is organized by members of a committee. This committee contains members that direct all aspects of the show. A large crew is put together, based on the needs of
the production itself. This crew includes models, volunteers, backstage crew, designers, makeup/hair stylists and more. Table 1 shows the shift in these numbers of participants over the years. In addition to the lack of a performance in 2006, a number of factors influence these numbers. The number of bands and designers determines the size and length of the show, which also affects the amount of crew and committee required to produce the show. For example, in VFA’s sophomore attempt (2005), a band and two designers (and their corresponding runways) were added to the line up making the show a larger endeavor. Consequently, the crew grew in order to accommodate, and the number of attendees grew as did the fan pool in the community. In contrast to 2005, the show in 2009 was downsized, causing the crew to shrink.

The committee continued to grow as VFA became more refined, creating a need for new positions. By 2008 this collection of positions was found to be sufficient and remained the same size the next year when the show was downsized. Finally, the number of attendees has fluctuated due to a number of factors: (a) the size of the fan base of the bands and designers involved, (b) the price of the tickets, and (c) the day of the week on which the show is held.

*Table 1: VFA Participant Numbers Over Time*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crew</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bands</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designers</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendees</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>1550</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>1650</td>
<td>1550</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Purpose of Study

In its first year of success, VFA was focused primarily on the production of the show. Over the years, Ms. Lee has shifted the focus to include the development of the aspiring creative minds involved. Her attempt has been to provide benefit to all those involved in the organization, and to ensure that members gain something from their involvement. One might ask what it is that the members of VFA are looking for from this involvement. The designers involved with the show have been nurtured through the development of their fashion lines as they have been given direction and advice with real-world application. The models and bands have developed through experience, connection building and advice. The crew, similarly, has found connection and experience in areas of their lives that is potentially different from their normal work-lives.

This study intends to delve further into the question of what brings these members to VFA. Is there something specific about VFA that appeals to a volunteer in this community? Perhaps there is something about this organization that could help inform another organization as to how to attract and retain valuable volunteers. Similarly, the purpose of this study is to inform Ms. Lee and MNfashion of how to continue to perpetuate VFA. A close look at the volunteers that have made this show possible will inform future practices for recruiting and retaining new members. In the last few years, VFA has seen more and more interest from the community to get involved. It is now in a position to pick the volunteers that will be the best fit for the organization.

Research Questions

The following list of questions represents the inquiries of this study. The answers to these questions desire to inform both the organization, VFA, and the volunteer community at large.
• How are individuals motivated to volunteer their time to an organization?
• What keeps them engaged in that endeavor?
• Are volunteers drawn to organizations that promote creativity from its members?
• What can VFA focus on in order to perpetuate volunteer involvement?

Definition of Terms

The following lists a number of terms referred to in this study and the definition with which they are intended.

Creativity. Any activity in which an individual is able to take part in seeking out new and/or alternative solutions.


Assumptions and Limitations of Study

For this study, the following assumptions and limitations must be kept in mind.
• All information and opinion provided to this researcher by those involved with the organization is accurate and truthful.
• Feedback is based on individual experience and not the relationship with the researcher.
• This research was done with one organization in mind. Consequently, some statements made are based on a small pool of information.
• The quantitative survey was sent to 148 participants, from which 50 respondents are used for the study. This represents a 33.8% response rate. Data results are based on the responses from those 50 which include crew, committee, models and stylists. No band members responded to the survey.
• The qualitative survey was sent to eight members of the committee for reaction. Only six respondents were recorded for this survey. While this number is very small, this researcher still sees purpose in its report.

Researcher Bias

As the reporter of this study, this researcher feels it is important to disclose a personal involvement with VFA. As a member of the original committee, followed by continual membership since, this researcher has had an inside view of the workings of this organization. It is possible that some opinions, established through those years of experience, may come through as this study is reported. In some cases, that experience and opinion will be used to inform the discussion.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to begin to understand the individuals that take part in VFA, let us look at some motivational factors affecting the volunteer community at large.

Motivational Factors

Motivation has been defined as “the energizing force that steers people toward desired end states” (Borgida, 2000, p. 347). Furthermore, Borgida purported that the intensity of that motivation “is affected by one’s needs, the potential outcomes of a behavior, and one’s expectation that a behavior will satisfy the need and achieve the outcome” (2000, p. 348). The motivation described here considers the human mind from a broad perspective. Considering motivation within the context of an organization, one begins to see a variety of motivating factors emerge.

Needs Based Motivation

One reoccurring theme that seems to affect motivation is the concept of needs and the fulfillment of those needs. Abraham Maslow formulated, perhaps, the most commonly known hierarchy of needs based on the human condition. While his theory has been exalted and criticized, this hierarchy of needs provides an explanation for why people are motivated to act. Maslow’s ultimate need, fulfilled when all other needs are met, is termed self-actualization. Here one is motivated by the desire to become more of oneself and to do what one is meant to do. In other words, to reach to the height of one’s own potential (Maslow, 1943). Maslow’s theory has been continually used as a framework for understanding human and organizational behavior (Strickland & Vaughan, 2008).

The concept of Quality Work Life (QWL) “can be defined as the favorable conditions and environments of a workplace that support and promote employee satisfaction by providing
workers with rewards, job security and growth opportunities” (Chan & Wyatt, 2007, p. 502).

QWL was derived from the concept of needs satisfaction developed by theorists such as Maslow. Here there is an assumption that people will attempt to satisfy their needs through their work. As discussed by Chan and Wyatt (2007), QWL is addressed through two approaches. First, one looks at the satisfaction of seven needs: (1) health and safety needs, (2) economic and family needs, (3) social needs, (4) esteem needs, (5) actualization needs, (6) knowledge needs, and (7) aesthetic needs. A second theoretical approach to QWL is the concept of spillover. This “suggests that satisfaction in one life domain may well influence satisfaction in another. This means that job satisfaction may affect other life domains such as family, leisure, social, health, financial and so on” (Chan & Wyatt, 2007, p. 504). In this way, the desire for a balance of work and life motivates an individual to meet the aforementioned needs.

While much of the consideration of needs based motivation has created a desire to put theory into hierarchical format, there has been discussion that this is unnecessary. “No one level of need is inherently more relevant to employee motivation than any other” (Haslam, Powell & Turner, 2000, p. 320). Haslam et al. (2000) goes on to purport that a desire to meet ones needs is based on a collective position as well as on a personal one. Furthermore, he considers the concept that one’s social identity within a group encompasses the needs that motivate. When this self-identity is connected to an organization or group “this creates needs and motivation to (a) embody norms associated with the category, (b) be perceived as embodying those norms by other members of the category, and (c) engage in activities which promote or maintain the interest of the category” (Haslam et al., 2000, p. 326). “When people categorize themselves at a personal level they should be motivated to satisfy personal needs that promote their personal identity as individuals, but when they categorize themselves at a social level, they should be
motivated to satisfy social needs that promote their social identity as group members” (Haslam et al., 2000, p. 327).

Public Service Motivation

The concept of Public Service Motivation (PSM) has been used to describe the difference between employees found in the public versus private sectors of the workforce. James L. Perry and Lois R. Wise (as cited in Mann, 2006, p. 33) defined PSM as “an individual’s predisposition to respond to motives grounded primarily or uniquely in public institutions and organizations.” Furthermore, it is said that there is a deep desire to make a difference in the larger community and a “reliance on intrinsic rewards as opposed to salary or job security” (Mann, 2006, p. 33).

As the study on PSM has continued in the last twenty years, the motives for public service have split into three categories. These categories include rational, normative and affective motives. Rational motives are said to be connected to “enlightened self-interest” and lead to a “commitment to public policy or special interest advocacy” (Mann, 2006, p. 34). Normative motives lead to a “desire to serve public interest and a concern for social equity” (Mann, 2006, p. 34). Finally, affective motives come from a desire to help others and a feeling of altruism. Here again, one can see a connection to the needs based work of Maslow as PSM is related to the human need for self-actualization.

In addition to PSM’s existence in the public sector of the workforce, similar attributes are found in the nonprofit sector. Studies have shown that non profit employees are more dedicated to the organization and the mission of that organization as they are highly interested in the opportunity to make a difference in their community. According to a “state of the nonprofit workforce” report, “more than 60 percent of the nonprofit employees said that they joined their organization for the chance to make a difference, rather than for salary and benefits. That
compares to only 27 percent for federal employees and 22 percent for private sector workers” (Mann, 2006, pp. 40-41). This result further proves what Wright found when he stated that “the importance employees place on contributing to the public service mission of their organizations may provide intrinsic rewards that compensate for the low levels of extrinsic rewards” (Wright, 2007, p. 54).

It has also been suggested that PSM affects people in different ways according to their specific area of concern. Four orientations have been titled – (a) samaritans, (b) communitarians, (c) patriots and (d) humanitarians. From these perspectives, the individuals’ motivation to be concerned with the greater good is affected in varying levels. The samaritan is concerned with the individual and identifies personally with the impoverished. The communitarian is concerned with the community and is willing to sacrifice themselves for that community. The patriot is concerned with the nation and is more aggressive than the communitarian in lieu of their civic duty. Finally, the humanitarian is concerned with humankind as a whole and is more altruistic with a strong sense of duty (Brewer, Selden & Facer, 2000).

The discussion of PSM has led to many studies on the motivating attributes of intrinsic and extrinsic reward. The results have indicated that “public employees are more likely to place a higher value on the intrinsic reward of work that is important and provides a feeling of accomplishment” (Houston, 2000, p. 713). Because this work also found that private-sector workers are more interested in extrinsic reward, it is suggested that the concept of PSM does exist and can be harnessed to motivate.

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation has been defined as motivation that “spurs behavior that is freely chosen and may be initiated due to curiosity, interest, a need for adventure, or a need for
stimulation” (Borgida, 2000, p. 348). In other words, “intrinsically motivated individuals engage in a task primarily out of their own interest in it” (Cooper & Jayatilaka, 2006, p. 154). In contrast, extrinsic motivation has been defined as motivation that “has as its impetus some external reward or threat. Behavior that is extrinsically motivated is performed as a means to an external ends” (Borgida, 2000, p. 348). In other words, “extrinsic motivation results from individuals perceiving an instrumental connection between their behavior and their receipt of extrinsic reward” (Cooper & Jayatilaka, 2006, p. 153). Deci (as cited in Benabou & Tirole, 2003, p. 504) said “if a person’s feelings of competence and self-determination are enhanced, his intrinsic motivation will increase. If his feelings of competence and self-determination are diminished, his intrinsic motivation will decrease.” Work done by Benabou and Tirole (2003) has shown that extrinsic rewards have an impact on intrinsic motivation. They have shown that “a reward is a positive reinforcer in the short term, but always decreases future motivation” (Benabou & Tirole, 2003 p. 503). Additionally, the impact of the reward on an employee’s intrinsic motivation is affected by their level of confidence in the task at hand and their perception of the situation. Ultimately, they concluded that incentive programs can backfire by undermining an individual’s confidence in their own abilities (Benabou & Tirole, 2003).

It has long been accepted that monetary rewards can often lead to a decrease in intrinsic motivation. However, some research has also shown that the use of extrinsic reward has little effect on subsequent motivation. In research done by Rosina C. Lao (1981), she tested the hypothesis that if a task is truly intrinsically motivating, then an extrinsic reward will have little effect. Through her research, she supported her hypothesis, showing that the important factor is that the work truly engages an individual on an intrinsic level (Lao, 1981).
Further research has suggested that the type of performance rewarded will alter the effect on intrinsic motivation. In other words, if the performance is novel, a reward will increase the intrinsic motivation. However, if the performance is conventional, a reward will decrease the intrinsic motivation (Eisenberger & Shanock, 2003).

Volunteer Organization Factors

Beyond the concept of what motivates an individual to do work, let us consider the motivating factors that bring an individual to a volunteer organization.

Organizational Commitment

Within the context of a volunteer organization, one has to look at factors that go beyond instrumental means. Research done by Boezeman and Ellemers (2008) focused on the concept of organizational commitment as a key motivator for volunteer organizations. Within this context, they considered affective commitment and normative commitment. “Affective commitment refers to a sense of emotional attachment to the organization. Normative commitment refers to a feeling of responsibility to stay with the organization” (Boezeman & Ellemers, 2008, p. 161).

As a predictor to this organizational commitment, it has been suggested that the feelings of pride and respect are present. In this context, “pride is used to refer to the conviction that the organization is positively valued; respect denotes the belief that the self is valued as a member of the organization” (Boezeman & Ellemers, 2008, p. 160). Ultimately, their work showed that “the perceived importance of volunteer work is an antecedent of pride, and that perceived organizational support is an antecedent of respect” (Boezeman & Ellemers, 2008, p. 169).
In comparison with paid workers, volunteers have reported higher levels of affective commitment to an organization. Van Vuuren, De Jong and Seydel (2008) concluded after having researched commitment level differences between paid and volunteer workers in an organization:

The results of this study show that not only can affective commitment be found with volunteers, but that especially normative commitment can emerge. As commitment of volunteers springs from several wells, their commitment may not be as fragile as is often assumed. This study showed that the absence of “the stick of paid work” does not lead to the situation that volunteers leave their tasks very easily. As indicated by their commitment, there seems to be an interdependence, even though volunteers are not paid for their contribution. They may need the organization as much as the organization needs them. (Van Vuuren et al., 2008, p. 324)

Extra-role Prosocial Organizational Behavior (EPSOB) is defined as “behavior that is not a formal or informal aspect of the worker’s role but which in the aggregate promotes the organization’s goals” (Schaubroeck & Ganster, 1991, p. 569). Many of the individuals found within a volunteer organization can be described as behaving in this way. Schaubroeck & Ganster (1991) hypothesized that the intrinsic satisfaction found in a role plus the affective commitment to an organization and alignment with the organizations values and goals would lead to the desire to volunteer in that organization. His research showed this hypothesis to be supported. In addition, he concluded that “the interaction between organizational commitment and organizational purpose may have practical implications that are unique to voluntary organizations” (Schaubroeck & Ganster, 1991, p. 579).
Volunteer Functions Inventory

Developed by E. Gil Clary, Robert Ridge, Arthur Stukas, Mark Snyder, John Copeland, Julie Haugen and Peter Miene, the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) purported six functions that are served by volunteerism and designed an instrument to assess them. These functions are values, understanding, social, career, protective and enhancement. “Values” refers to the desire to “express values related to altruistic and humanitarian concerns for others” (Clary et al., 1998, p. 1517). “Understanding” speaks to the opportunity that volunteers may seek out to have new learning experiences. “Social” drives the volunteer to seek out new relationships with others. “Career” concerns the volunteers’ desire to benefit their chosen career path. “Protective” refers to a desire to counteract potential feelings of guilt a volunteer might have if they chose not to volunteer. Finally, “enhancement” takes the protective function one step further to speak to the volunteer’s desire to be a better, more well rounded individual (Clary et al., 1998).

As a result of their research, the implication was made that in order to ensure continued participation in a volunteer organization, a focus on person-situation fit is important. “Volunteers who serve in roles that match their own motivations will derive more satisfaction and more enjoyment from their service and be more likely to intend to continue to serve than those whose motivations are not being addressed by their activities” (Clary et al., 1998, p. 1528). The result is that a volunteer organization should consider not only the individual volunteer, but their fit in the volunteer role in order to ensure commitment.

Organizational Based Self-esteem

Another factor influencing volunteerism is the concept of Organizational-Based Self-Esteem (OBSE). OBSE “reflects the perception individuals have of themselves as important, meaningful, effectual, and worthwhile within their organization” (Mayer, Fraccastoro & McNary,
2007, p. 327). Many studies show that volunteers are primarily motivated by personal rather than career oriented desires. “Volunteers donate their time and services to contribute to a cause they believe is worthwhile, and, in the process, they gain a sense of satisfaction and friendships by giving back to the community” (Mayer et al., 2007, p. 337). How does OBSE effect the extent to which an individual volunteers? Research done by Brad Mayer, Katherine Fraccastoro and Lisa McNary showed the following hypotheses to be true.

1. Individuals with higher OBSE volunteer more days per year than those individuals with lower OBSE.
2. Individuals with higher OBSE have volunteered for a longer length of time than those individuals with lower OBSE.
3. OBSE will be related to a sense of worth for why an individual volunteers.
4. OBSE will be related to a values motive for why an individual volunteers.
5. OBSE will be related to a social motive for why an individual volunteers.
6. OBSE will be related to an understanding motive for why an individual volunteers.

(Mayer et al., 2007, p. 337)

In addition to these hypotheses, they found no correlation in two hypotheses suggested in the same study. “Individuals with higher OBSE will continue to volunteer longer than those individuals with lower OBSE. OBSE will be related to a career motive for why an individual volunteers” (Mayer et al., 2007, p. 337).

Creative Organizations

Rogers (1954, p. 252) argued that creativity arises from individuals’ exploration of their personal aptitudes and interests: “We must face the fact that the individual creates primarily
because it is satisfying to him, because this behavior is felt to be self-actualizing…” Similarly, Fabian talked of creativity in the following way.

The creative process is an inherent life rhythm that everyone has. It expresses a need to order chaos. Whether that is making order out of building blocks or piles of paper, choosing specific articles of clothing to assemble on our bodies from a closet full of choices, or combining a variety of spices and foods in a pot for sustenance – that inherent ability to order chaos is being utilized. They are essentially creative acts, if we don’t respond with the same habitual response each time or follow a set pattern. When we don’t rely on the safe, habitual responses, when we can tolerate uncertainty, confusion and the discomfort of chaos, the possibility that creative solutions can emerge increases. (1998, p. 212)

In regard to an individual’s creativity when fulfilling a role within a group or organization, “people would feel safe to be creative if they believed others accepted their worth unconditionally and were empathetic and nonjudgmental concerning their needs and desires” (Eisenberger & Shanock, 2003, p. 122). In researching the concept of increasing said creativity through reward, differing results were found. While it is often believed that the use of reward will reduce intrinsic motivation as well as creativity, it seems that is not always the case. “Studies indicate that reward for high performance increases perceived self-determination and perceived competence; these factors, in turn, increase intrinsic motivation. Such heightened task interest may promote creativity” (Eisenberger & Shanock, 2003, p. 127). It seems that when an individual anticipates a reward for creativity, the creativity is enhanced. Additionally, “reward can heighten creativity via increased intrinsic task interest” (Eisenberger & Shanock, 2003, p.
127). In order to use intrinsic task interest in this way, it seems that establishing the purpose and intention to be creative is important.

While the use of intrinsic task reward can be beneficial to a creative outcome, extrinsic reward seems to have a seemingly negative effect. “Extrinsic motivation reduces individuals’ freedom in that their behaviors tend to be confined to actions instrumental in gaining the rewards” (Cooper & Jayatilaka, 2006, p. 158). In their research on the effect of various motivations on creativity, Cooper and Jayatilaka (2006) showed that their hypothesis which stated that extrinsic motivation would decrease group creativity was supported.

Research Summary

As the preceding literature review has discussed, individuals that enter into a volunteer organization are primarily interested in the intrinsic reward found there in. It seems as though they are interested in being a part of an organization that they can commit to in a way that is motivated by feelings of pride and heightened self-actualization versus the desire for extrinsic reward. They are primarily concerned with the betterment of not only themselves, but also the organization they are part of and the larger community surrounding the organization. As it has been shown, monetary reward (or extrinsic reward) can often damage the intrinsic reward found in the same situation.

Creativity is encouraged by intrinsic reward and often enhanced as the individual feels more connected with the role they are playing. Because we know that creativity is often at it’s highest in individuals that have the opportunity to create for the pure sake of it, we can further assume that creativity is often most successful in individuals that bring themselves to it.

Finally, it is this researcher’s opinion that a volunteer organization geared toward the process of creativity will have little trouble supporting its endeavors. Individuals interested in
the intrinsic reward of volunteering will undoubtedly continue to seek out an organization interested in supporting this type of reward.

Adlerian Summary

In researching the motivations of a volunteer, many Adlerian concepts come to the surface. At its basis, the very idea of volunteering one’s time to an organization without the intention of receiving monetary compensation is an Adlerian concept. As was discussed, the desire for an intrinsic reward, often found in the betterment of the larger community, has a direct relation to the social interest of which Adler spoke. Individuals involving themselves in volunteer endeavors are moving in a horizontal striving pattern, as the goal for involvement is to better the organization and community and not necessarily their own standing within their respective groups. The individual finds fulfillment of needs based not on finding superiority over others, but rather on the self actualization of which Maslow spoke. They seek the safety, belonging and significance found in an organization that promises the individual superiority as a member of a successful organization and not as an individual within it. This promotes the Organizational Commitment referred to in the research.

Similarly, the Organizational Based Self-esteem (OBSE) found within a volunteer organization, also speaks to Adlerian ideas of knowing oneself as a product of the groups of which one is a member. As a member of the community, a volunteer will feel pride in the products that their organization can put into said community. As the research showed, the higher the OBSE is in the individual, the more time they will give to their organization. The individual that is proud of their involvement with an organization will derive more self esteem from that group and identify more closely with it.
When an organization offers the individual an opportunity to grow personally within the confines of the organization, it in turn promotes its own growth. In this way the individual commits to the organizations’ growth, as they commit to their own. This intrinsic motivation creates a social interest that connects the volunteer to the organization: they become a member of the organization versus simply a volunteer within it. The volunteer that is interested in vertical striving and self interest will quickly be detected and most likely find they have no place within said organization, if they even bring themselves to volunteer their time in the first place.

An Adlerian consideration of the creative process looks at the research that describes it as expressing a need to put order to chaos. The chaos that exists in this case is the product that needs order to bring it to fruition. It is the constant movement between order and disorder that appeals to an individual as they desire to be a part of the movement. It is this contribution to the organization and participation in the creation of order, or witness to the move into disorder, that intrigues the volunteer and encourages the continued involvement. When the volunteer is able to collaborate with the organization to be a part of the creative process, there is an intrinsic reward in the significance that is found by the individual as well as the organization as a whole. Once again, the individual finds safety, belonging and significance in the horizontal striving of the organization.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Design of Study

The organization, VFA, was studied in two ways. First, a qualitative set of questions was put to a set of eight participants at two different stages in the production of the show. Only six participants responded to the second inquiry. The intention here was to establish if the desires of participants remain constant over the duration of involvement. These questions will be described further in chapter 4, along with the answers given by each individual.

Secondly, a quantitative survey was sent, via email, to 148 members of the organization. These questions were designed to address three topics: (1) the participant’s main reason for involvement, (2) how different the participant’s daily job is from their involvement in VFA and (3) their intention for continued involvement with the organization (see Appendix A for copy of email).

Description of Participants

The initial set of participants was selected from the committee comprised of organization leaders. These eight committee members were present at a meeting held on March 1, 2009 and were then able to provide appropriate reaction at a later date.

The second set of participants was selected from those who had been a part of the production of 2009. This included crew members, committee members, models, band members, designers and stylists.

Data Collection Process

On May 13, 2009, both surveys were sent out via email. The initial survey was sent to individuals as there was requested information that would prove specific to the individual. This
will be explained further in chapter 4. Six responses to this email were collected and compared to comments from the March 1, 2009 meeting.

As responses to the second survey came in, data was recorded and categorized. Respondents were sorted, initially, according to their role as either a production member or a performer. Performers were considered to be models and band members. Production members were considered to be all other positions. A total of 50 responses were recorded and used for this study. As stated earlier, this represents a 33.8% response rate which indicates a relatively high interest in expressing opinion regarding the volunteer’s time with VFA. This is an encouraging fact in light of the perpetuation of the organization.
CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF DATA

Presentation of Qualitative Survey Results

For the initial survey, each participant was presented with an email that included their individual responses at the March 1, 2009 meeting as well as requested new thoughts on those responses (see Appendix B). The following is a report of those correspondences.

March 1, 2009 Meeting

Question (Put to the committee by Anna Lee): Why are you involved with VFA and what do you hope to get out of your involvement?

Charles: I get to use skills I don’t normally get to use. I don’t usually do events of this style. It’s nice to see the bands become more connected as we get closer to the show.

Researcher’s Summary: New experiences and connections.

David: After being involved since the beginning, I can’t imagine the show happening without being a part of it!

Researcher’s Summary: Loyalty.

James: I enjoy being a part of a project with such a dynamic output. It is tangible and well recognized!

Researcher’s Summary: Product and recognition.
**Kelsy:** Voltage is a way to let out your creative passion. People feel supported and want their voice to be heard here. This gives us a chance to be a vital part of the community. Also, I appreciate the flexibility of involvement — allows us to get involved and move on.

*Researcher’s Summary:* Creativity, support, involvement.

**Kristen:** I’m happy to have grown into a more creative role. I forget how much people want to be involved in this show and I love what it’s done for the fashion community!

*Researcher’s Summary:* Creativity and community.

**Anna:** We are an organization and we have grown into an important part of the community where people feel supported.

*Researcher’s Summary:* Community and support.

**March 1 Question Summary:** Three of the six respondents are interested in bettering the community and support found with VFA. A fourth was interested in making connections within that community. Two reported a desire for a creative outlet. One was interested in affiliation with the product of that creativity. Finally, a desire to remain loyal to the cause was expressed by one individual.

In interpreting these responses in an Adlerian light, a number of key factors emerge. First and foremost, the desire for community is repeatedly present. The desire for belonging and membership within this community as well as an interest in contributing to the community is present. The desire to remain loyal speaks to the individual’s commitment to the group and interest in prolonging the safety, belonging and significance found therein. A desire for a
creative outlet refers to not only the need to contribute but also the desire to collaborate on the larger project. The interest in affiliation with the product has a hint of vertical striving to it as the individual may be interested in the “fame” that comes along with being a part of the product. However, this affiliation is not necessarily desired to be without the rest of the organization involved.

*May 13, 2009 Email Survey Responses*

**Question One: Do you feel that your reason for getting involved with Voltage was fulfilled? Why or Why not?**

*Charles (personal communication, May 14, 2009):* Yes. I originally got involved with Voltage to learn more about larger productions and to learn more about productions that are not solely musical. Voltage has allowed me to learn more about the fashion industry, the perspectives of designers, models, production coaches, set designers, fashion writers/photographers, etc. Voltage has also allowed me to learn more about audience participants and what they value in a production like this one. I would say that Voltage has left me fulfilled and then some. However, there is always more to learn and you can never stop getting better at your job.

*Researcher’s Summary:* Yes – acquired desired knowledge and more.

*David (personal communication, May 14, 2009):* I feel strongly that people should share from where there strengths are. The things I do for Voltage are easy for me where they might be difficult for others, and that fulfills me because I feel I am offering expertise. I also feel fulfilled because of the success of the event, and going back to what I said about not being able to
imagine not being a part of it, I am glad I can say “we” when talking about Voltage and not have to say “them.”

*Researcher’s Summary:* Yes – able to offer expertise and is part of the success.

*James (personal communication, May 15, 2009):* I do feel my reason for getting involved was fulfilled. Like you know, I used to be in shows when I was younger—plays, musicals, both at high school and outside, etc. I don’t really participate in them anymore, but volunteering for events like this lets me both see the shows and still participate in them. (Voltage is definitely the most involved I get in a volunteer gig, but I also usher at the Illusion, the Ritz and volunteer like crazy during the MN Fringe Festival every year.) It’s kind of selfish volunteerism—I’m not exactly volunteering for altruistic purposes, but to get something back as well. And I definitely got a lot out of this experience.

*Researcher’s Summary:* Yes – able to participate and enjoy in manageable amounts.

*Kelsy (personal communication, June 9, 2009):* My reasons for being involved in Voltage are always fulfilled! We have created a family of friends throughout these years and doing it together makes it all worth while. Oh, and don’t let me forget... I get to see my original hair creations come alive on the runway.. There’s no other feeling quite like it!

*Researcher’s Summary:* Yes – desired feeling of family and creativity.

*Kristen (personal communication, May 18, 2009):* My reasons for being involved with Voltage were again fulfilled this year. I think the production was our best yet, and I felt again that this production, and surrounding events, have done a lot of good for the homegrown fashion and
retail industry here in the metro area. Creatively each year I love taking the opportunity to write copy, something that I don’t do professionally at my day job, but I love doing on the side. Another fulfillment for me each year is being part of a talented and driven committee. I’m always impressed at how far we’ve come since the first year and how smoothly we pull this off!

*Researcher’s Summary:* Yes – community improvement and creativity.

Anna (*personal communication, May 19, 2009*): Voltage is a form of art. I see Voltage as adding logic to a creative concept and we have been successful in that. It’s an intuitive organization and I’m proud of where it has gone. Here is a group of dedicated people that are connected outside of the logic. I see part of my role as connecting people to opportunities.

*Researcher’s Summary:* Yes – intuition and connections.

*Question One Summary:* All six respondents felt that their reason for involvement was fulfilled. Three were fulfilled for the creation of community and a family feeling. Two were interested in the opportunity to be creative. One was interested in knowledge while another was interested in offering expertise. Finally, one was fulfilled simply by participating and finding enjoyment.

From an Adlerian perspective, these respondents have found the significance they sought in their involvement with the organization. Those seeking out the betterment of the community, and the family-feeling found in the organization, have been motivated by their social interest. Similarly, offering expertise shows a social interest toward other members of the community. The opportunity to be creative is, again, showing an interest in contribution and collaboration with the group as a whole.
Question Two: Do you intend to be involved with Voltage again? Why or Why not?

*Charles (personal communication, May 14, 2009):* Yes, I’d love to be involved in Voltage again. It’s an amazing opportunity and very valuable to me as I see it building. I’m fascinated to see where it will go in the future and would like to be a part of its growth.

*Researcher’s Summary:* Yes – value and growth.

*David (personal communication, May 14, 2009):* I will probably be involved again. I’ve gotten the parts I contribute down to a sort of system which makes them fit easily into my life.

*Researcher’s Summary:* Yes – ease of involvement.

*James (personal communication, May 15, 2009):* Definitely. Same reasons as above. I like getting involved in activities or events that I feel strongly about, and Voltage is definitely one of those experiences. Seeing all your hard work translate into a successful show before your eyes is incredibly rewarding.

*Researcher’s Summary:* Yes – rewarding.

*Kelsy (personal communication, June 9, 2009):* I would absolutely love to be apart of Voltage again in the future. I did step down from my Director of Hair role and am moving out of state, but the love of the organization will never go away.

*Researcher’s Summary:* No – desires to but is unable.

*Kristen (personal communication, May 18, 2009):* I intend to continue being involved with Voltage again next year. It’s hard to imagine not being involved, really. I think each year we
make a better production and I’m excited to see where it will grow from such a fantastic 2009 production.

*Researcher’s Summary:* Yes – growth.

*Anna (personal communication, May 19, 2009):* I’m a connector and will continue to be. I want to see growth with balance continue with VFA.

*Researcher’s Summary:* Yes – growth.

*Question Two Summary:* Five intend to be involved with VFA again. One will be unable to be involved again. Of the five who will be involved again, three are interested in witnessing and being a part of the continuing growth. One is interested in the reward of involvement and one feels compelled to return by the ease of their role for VFA.

An Adlerian view shows, yet again, a commitment to the growth of the community. The contribution given through involvement is desirable as it allows the individual to find significance along with the rest of the organization. Of these six committee members, it is apparent that all have found safety, belonging and significance within the organization. This is potentially explained by the tenure most committee members have as all of the six members have two or more years of experience with this organization. When returning to the production, they bring with them confidence in the brand and a renewed interest in the collaboration that the group asks of them. They feel the importance of their role as they feel their belonging to the group. Finally, they witness the significance of their participation in both the outcome of the product and subsequent positive review.
Discussion of Qualitative Survey Results

Upon the review of the qualitative responses, one sees a few presenting trends. Throughout their involvement in VFA, the majority of participants were interested in being a part of the community that VFA has created. This interest is extended to the larger community within which VFA exists. Not only are these participants interested in giving to this community, but they are interested in the support that they reciprocally receive.

There is also a reoccurring theme around the desire to be a part of the creative product that VFA produces. Additionally, the desire to be a part of this creation has led to a desire to see VFA continue to grow as well. These participants are interested in the perpetuation of the organization and are willing to continue to add their support to that endeavor.

From the Adlerian perspective, we see that these participants know how important the community is to the growth of VFA. They continue to donate their time to that community in order to perpetuate the existence and growth of VFA. As they do so, they also receive support from the community, and the individual and organization are able to move forward together. This horizontal movement is not only healthy, but will continue to perpetuate the organization so long as the individual feels they are an integral part.

In addition, because the endeavor is a creative one, the individuals wish to come back to put order to the project every year. This creative product, while the backbone of the organization, draws participants, as it offers a unique set of opportunities. The individual is able to take part in the creative product from a variety of angles, e.g., by performing, designing fashion, designing the stage and show, putting order to publicity or orchestrating backstage movement. By offering this type of experience in the setting that VFA provides, the organization offers an opportunity to
be significant and recognized, but as a part of the larger picture and along with everyone else involved.

The individuals involved in the qualitative survey, as stated before, are all returning participants in VFA and have all seen the show from the inner committee perspective. If one were to put the layout of the show into a family constellation, as Adler would have, these individuals would have been located in the middle as the rest of the participants would have a position radiating out from this center. In order to see a larger picture, let us look at the quantitative survey and see if similar trends hold true.

Presentation of Quantitative Survey Results

The following shows a compilation of the results of the quantitative email survey in which fifty respondents are represented. The responses were based on a likert scale from 1 to 6 where 1 represented strongly disagree and 6 represented strongly agree. Shown here is a compilation of the answers given by the 50 respondents, along with an average of their responses. For the purposes of interpretation, we will use a score of 4.5 as a “criteria for success.” To see the responses for each of the individual respondents, see Appendix C.

1. The role I play(ed) for Voltage is(was) very different from the role I play in my regular work.
   1: 7 respondents
   2: 7 respondents
   3: 7 respondents
   4: 7 respondents
   5: 11 respondents
   6: 11 respondents
   Average response: 3.8

2. Taking part in Voltage allows me to fulfill my desire for a creative outlet.
   1: 2 respondents
   2: 3 respondents
   3: 7 respondents
   4: 6 respondents
5: 18 respondents
6: 14 respondents
Average response: 4.5

3. I take part in Voltage primarily to network with other professionals in my community.

   No response: 1 respondent
   1: 3 respondents
   2: 8 respondents
   3: 5 respondents
   4: 18 respondents
   5: 10 respondents
   6: 5 respondents
   Average response: 3.8

4. I take part in Voltage primarily to gain experience and boost my resume.

   1: 2 respondents
   2: 11 respondents
   3: 8 respondents
   4: 8 respondents
   5: 17 respondents
   6: 4 respondents
   Average response: 3.8

5. Taking part in Voltage allows me to fulfill my desire to share my knowledge and experience with others in my community.

   1: 3 respondents
   2: 6 respondents
   3: 9 respondents
   4: 11 respondents
   5: 15 respondents
   6: 6 respondents
   Average response: 3.9

6. I intend to be involved with Voltage again in the future.

   1: 4 respondents
   2: 2 respondents
   3: 4 respondents
   4: 6 respondents
   5: 7 respondents
   6: 27 respondents
   Average response: 4.8
Discussion of Quantitative Survey Results

The quantitative survey was intended to look at three different areas: (1) the participant’s main reason for involvement, (2) how different the participant’s daily job is from their involvement in VFA and (3) their intention for continued involvement with the organization. Questions two thru five addressed area 1. Question one addressed area 2 and question six addressed area 3. The results of the survey will be discussed according to the area addressed.

Area 1: Main Reason for Involvement

In order to get a more clear interpretation of the responses, the scores were added and an average was extracted. In order to look at this topic, question one and six were discarded. Table 2 shows the results. In it we can see that the desire for a creative outlet is the highest rated reason for getting involved. Overall, creativity is the only reason that reached our criteria for success of 4.5.

Table 2: Average Responses for Reasons for Involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience Gaining</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing Knowledge</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Next, in order to look at this data from a different angle, the results were split according to the number of years the individual has given to VFA. Twenty two individuals were used to represent responses from those who have been involved with VFA for one year. Twenty eight
individuals were used to represent those who have returned to VFA for more than one year. These results were then averaged and the comparison can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3: Comparing Average Responses for Reasons for Involvement According to Time Involved with VFA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>First Year</th>
<th>Returning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience Gaining</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing Knowledge</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows us that, while a desire for creativity is still the predominant reason for involvement, another trend is interesting to note. It seems that the desire for creativity remains constant even after the first year of involvement, while the desire for networking, experience and knowledge-sharing diminish over time. Perhaps this is explained by the individuals’ initial introduction into the community, causing a diminished need for networking in subsequent years. Similarly, unless the individual chooses to work in a different capacity for VFA, the experience gaining and knowledge-sharing will have occurred primarily in the first year. Creativity is still the only category that has reached the criteria for success. However, the desire to share knowledge approaches the criteria for success in the first year of participation.

In order to get a better picture of how these move over time, let us look at some average scores where those returning to VFA have been split into second, third and a combined fourth
and fifth years of participation. Twenty two individuals are used for the first year, 11 for the second year, eight for the third and nine for the combined fourth and fifth. This can be seen in Table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>First Year</th>
<th>Second Year</th>
<th>Third Year</th>
<th>Fourth/Fifth Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain Experience</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share Knowledge</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here we can see, again, that creativity remains relatively constant throughout. However, networking experiences a decline in the second year and knowledge-sharing sees a spike in the third year. The decline in the desire for networking in the second year could be explained by the previous establishment of relationships in the first year. Perhaps the second year serves to further these relationships while the following years are used to reinvest in networking. The data shows a small decline again in the fourth and fifth year. Perhaps this tells us that it takes the individual two years to establish networked relationships.

The spike in desire for knowledge-sharing in the third year could be explained by the individuals’ experience of the previous years. At this point in time, the individual has been a part of the show for two years and is ready to teach new volunteers. They may also be able to move their daily work more closely to what they do with VFA, causing them to desire to share that experience with others as well.

In an attempt to investigate these spikes, a third approach to the data was used. The results were split according to the individuals’ position with VFA. Performers were made up of
models and band members and totaled 16 responses. Production was made up of all other positions and totaled 32 responses. These results were averaged and this is shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Comparing Average Responses for Reasons for Involvement According to Position with VFA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Production</th>
<th>Performers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience Gaining</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing Knowledge</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here we see the same trend that keeps a desire for creativity as the highest rated. However, it is the production members that put this category into the criteria for success. It is more important to them than to the performers. This graph also shows a difference in that production members are more interested in sharing their knowledge and expertise where performers are more interested in networking.

In order to further compare these results over time, the production and performer results were broken down in Table 6 and 7. Production responses used 13 participants for the first year, eight for the second, seven for the third and six for the combined fourth and fifth years. Performer responses used nine participants for the first year, three for the second, one for the third and three for the combined fourth and fifth years.
Table 6: Production Responses Over Time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First Year</th>
<th>Second Year</th>
<th>Third Year</th>
<th>Fourth/Fifth Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain Experience</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share Knowledge</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Performer Responses Over Time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First Year</th>
<th>Second Year</th>
<th>Third Year</th>
<th>Fourth/Fifth Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain Experience</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share Knowledge</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Indicates only one participant’s responses used.

In response to the earlier notation regarding Table 5, we saw a significant decline in the need for networking in the second year and a spike in the desire to share knowledge in the third year. The comparison of Table 6 and 7 provides an interesting answer. Both production members and performers rate networking the lowest in the second year, in comparison to other years of participation. This could be explained by the fact that they have fulfilled their need for networking after a year of participation and have therefore made the connections they wish to make. For both production and performers, this number goes back up after the second year, perhaps showing an interest in trying something new yet again, and seeking connection within VFA to do so.

The spike in the third year for sharing knowledge is clearly created by the production members. In fact, the third year of participation for production members is the only time in which any of the four reasons for involvement are rated higher than the desire for creativity. While creativity is still rated as the second highest, this desire to share knowledge seems to be of utmost importance to production members. This could be explained by the two years of
experience gained by these participants, followed by a desire to share what they have learned, not only in regards to VFA, but also the development in their own work life. How similar is their regular work to their role in VFA in the third year?

**Area 2: Difference from Daily Job**

The overall average response regarding the difference of the individual’s VFA role from their daily work was 3.8 where 6 represents that their daily job is very different from VFA. Initially, this seems to have little worth to the researcher as 4.5 is the criteria for success. However, this still shows that the majority of respondents play a role at VFA that is different from their daily job. Let us consider the preceding question and find an answer as we look at responses over time in Table 8.

**Table 8: Average Responses Regarding Difference from Daily Job Over Time**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First Year</th>
<th>Second Year</th>
<th>Third Year</th>
<th>Fourth/Fifth Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Production</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performer</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This tells us that in the third year, when production members were most interested in sharing their knowledge, they average on the “disagree” side of the scale, indicating their job is similar to the work they do with VFA. This was similarly rated in the second year of participation indicating that as they continued involvement with VFA, they were able to move their daily work closer to what they do with VFA. Perhaps in their third year, when they have shared their knowledge and learning, they choose to try new endeavors, causing the spike in rating in the fourth and fifth year. Here, the individual has chosen to work in different capacities from what they do with VFA.
Conversely, performers rating declines over time indicating that their daily work gets
closer to the work they do for VFA. This may tell us that it takes the performers four to five
years to get into the industry so as to make a living in this manner. This may also indicate that
VFA is successful in launching budding performance careers in the area. While the organization
looks for new talent every year and hopes to provide fresh faces with the opportunity to be
involved, there are always a handful of performers that return. These performers have found
success in their involvement with VFA. Not only has their involvement given them an
opportunity to market themselves, but it has given tools to use in the industry to further their
success.

_Area 3: Intention to Continue Involvement_

The overall average response regarding the respondents’ intention to continue work with
VFA is 4.8, therefore exceeding the criteria for success. Upon looking at the subcategories,
shown in Table 9, we see another variation of the results.

_Table 9: Subcategories Average Intention to Continue Involvement_
Here we can see that performers and first year participants have the highest rating for intention to return to VFA. However, all areas have reached the criteria for success. A closer look at these numbers over time shows a slightly different, but predictable picture (Table 10).

Table 10: Intention to Return to VFA Over Time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First Year</th>
<th>Second Year</th>
<th>Third Year</th>
<th>Fourth/Fifth Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Production</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performer</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this case, not all areas meet the criteria for success of 4.5. Performers seem to be on a decline for the first three years of involvement which is indicative of their becoming more successful in their own field. As they find more work as paid models, it stands to reason that they would be less interested in working unpaid jobs such as VFA. The small spike in the fourth and fifth year participants can be explained as those individuals have been with the show since its inception. In this case this number is derived from the responses of three models that have become known for working with VFA and will likely continue, barring unforeseen circumstance.

The fluctuation in the production member ratings could possibly be explained by the years in which they were present. Members involved with the show for three years witnessed the increase in the size of the committee and therefore experienced the change to more specified and organized committee work. They also witnessed the downsizing of the show after having experienced it twice in its previous line up. Perhaps they were encouraged by the continued refinement of the show where the experience was different for those involved for only two years. These members would only have witnessed the downsizing of the show as well as a decrease in attendance. While the third year participants also saw this decrease, they would have known that the pinnacle of attendance was actually a negative on the overall show as the building itself was
over capacity and made the show difficult to view. A second year participant would not have known this and may have viewed the lower attendance and smaller show as a negative.

It is also interesting to note that the way production members rate their intent to return changes similarly to the way they rate their interest in sharing knowledge and desire for creativity. Perhaps the production member’s desire to return to VFA changes when they are reinvested in the concept of sharing their knowledge with the community and desire to find outlet for their creativity. The third year also coincides with the shift in the difference from their daily work. They intend to return to VFA when their job is most similar to what they do with VFA. Perhaps they have less intention to return when their daily work begins to take on new direction as well.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTED FUTURE RESEARCH

Conclusions

In order to derive meaning from the preceding study, let us consider the research questions asked. First, how are individuals motivated to volunteer their time to an organization? From Chapter 2, we know that volunteers are interested in community development and intrinsic reward. Volunteers, inherently, are interested in a greater good outside of themselves. When committed to an organization on a personal level, they become a member of that organization and take pride in the work in which the organization takes pride. In this way an individual buys into the vision of the organization and shares it. They are also able to find fulfillment in their involvement as their needs are met by their belonging to the group. An organization that can offer this feeling of safety and belonging will entice new volunteers.

This survey shows a distinct desire for a creative outlet. As the research indicated, this creative outlet is not specific. It can be in the form of a unique product, such as the production VFA creates, or the simple opportunity to create order in an otherwise disorganized situation. By offering an individual the chance to be accountable and responsible for a portion of a project in which a group is partaking, the organization offers that individual the opportunity to be significant along with a group. This horizontal movement is desirable for a volunteer as they are not seeking promotion or extrinsic reward. The success VFA has had in bringing individuals into its fold is representative here as it provides a community where the volunteer finds what he/she seeks: an opportunity to better oneself, one’s community and to find an outlet for creativity not present in other organizations or in daily life.

Second, what keeps volunteers engaged in an organization? In Chapter 2, we see a need for continued evaluation of the positions held by its members. “Volunteers who serve in roles
that match their own motivations will derive more satisfaction and more enjoyment from their service and be more likely to intend to continue to serve than those whose motivations are not being addressed by their activities” (Clary et al., 1998, p. 1528). A member of a volunteer organization is rewarded by little other than the success of the organization as a whole and the recognition of their role in that success. When a volunteer finds themselves in a role that they no longer wish to hold, they will be disenchanted and most likely move on. At this point, the only thing that will keep that volunteer engaged will be their loyalty to the group and the individuals involved.

As was seen in the survey, there is much loyalty found within VFA. Many members remain, as they are more interested in perpetuating the organization and the community than they are in playing the role that they serve. While VFA continues to offer these individuals a creative outlet every year, the show itself rarely changes, occasionally causing the individual to feel they are no longer in a creative situation. In the case of VFA, which seems to be interested in providing a launching pad for new volunteers every year, perhaps this is not a concern. The number of people interested in getting involved with VFA grows every year, therefore ensuring its continuation. However, for an organization interested in engaging the same volunteers every year, it will be important to continue to create new challenges for its members.

The data also shows us that the reasons an individual is drawn to work with VFA change over the course of their involvement. Those that have returned to VFA have altered their priorities with subsequent years of involvement. As their experience changes with time, so does their desire to share their knowledge and experience as well as their desire to further their own experience and networking. Ultimately, they remain engaged as they continue to be able to get what they desire out of their involvement. It is this flexibility that remains appealing.
Third, are volunteers drawn to organizations that promote creativity from its members? Chapter 2 speaks of an intrinsic reward found in being a part of a creative outlet as well as the importance of an organization offering a product of which to be proud. Pride and respect derived from the involvement in a volunteer organization will perpetuate an individual’s participation. The creative aspect of an organization will appeal, as it not only offers the volunteer something to be proud of, but a unique experience of which to be a part. As was apparent in the qualitative survey, some individuals feel so much pride for the organization they have helped to build that they have difficulty imagining ever walking away.

The quantitative survey results show a definite desire for creativity from the members of VFA. It also showed a distinct desire to share knowledge with the other members of the community, especially from production members. This interest in sharing knowledge has no other purpose but to be socially interested. This indicates that the vision VFA purports which is to better the community, is subscribed to by its members: truly a shared vision.

Individuals attracted to working with VFA are interested in the specific opportunity that it provides as it offers an intrinsic reward unique to the organization. Because the organization is known for this opportunity to be creative, it draws countless new volunteers every year. Individuals are interested in being a member of a group that offers them a chance to add their ideas and methods to a community that has had much success and still manages to remain open to new perspective and change.

Finally, what can VFA focus on in order to perpetuate volunteer involvement? It seems evident that a continued focus on the production of the show will draw participants back to seek out the creativity it affords. Additionally, a continued focus on appropriate placement of the volunteers within is important as it will reengage those that may be ready for new challenges. It
will be important to take into account the number of years the individual has put into the show as well as the position they have held. What is their daily work like? Is it similar or dissimilar to what they do for the show? In many cases, the individual may be interested in doing something different from their daily work, while others may be interested in the opposite. The important factor is that the organization remains flexible enough for that individual to determine the answer to that for themselves. As VFA has created much movement in the community as well as within itself, it would become stagnant if the members of the organization did not remain flexible as well.

As history has shown, thus far VFA seems to have an inherent understanding of these suggestions. As one member leaves and is replaced by another, the fluidity of the organization remains. Each individual that enters the fold, brings with them new perspective that seems to be respected by existing members. It is this collective and collaborative attitude that perpetuates the existence of VFA. It seems that VFA has become an organization with the right equation and perhaps should be imitated by other aspiring organizations.

Suggested Future Research

It is this researcher’s opinion that much additional research could be conducted on this topic. First, a second look at VFA could prove interesting after another set of years/productions has gone by. Currently, the organization has begun to offer monetary compensation to some members. The intention has been to allow for the individual to focus more on the creativity of VFA and less on regular work (Anna Lee, personal communication, May 19, 2009). It would be interesting to see how this continues to evolve and what impact it has on the organization.

Second, research done on other organizations that offer a creative outlet to its participants could prove worthwhile. Community theaters, for example, have a similar following and give
individuals an opportunity to take part in something, typically, different from their regular work. The desires that bring individuals to VFA and other organizations like it are different from other volunteers. Often, this type of organization brings out those that are interested in receiving something for their time, other than a fulfillment of altruistic intentions. There are many unexplored dynamics to this phenomenon. It seems a closer look is in order.

As VFA moves into its 7th year and 6th production, it seems clear that all members are interested in seeing its continuation. As the organization continues to evolve and grow, it is this researcher’s hope that it will continue to find new ways to offer support and value to the community around it.
References


Hello veteran Voltage: Fashion Amplified members!

My name is Sarah Madsen and I have been the Stage Manager for Voltage since its inception. I have worked with many of you through the production of the show and many of you I have not yet had the pleasure to meet. I am currently finishing a masters degree at Adler Graduate School for which I am writing a thesis regarding the volunteerism found in Voltage. This email is coming to you in the hopes of eliciting some feedback regarding your involvement with Voltage over the last year(s).

Please take a moment to consider the following statements and rate them according to the accompanying scale. Then reply to this email with those ratings, the number of years you have been involved with Voltage and the position(s) you have held.

Thank you so much for your time and all the hard work you have put into Voltage!
Sarah Madsen

Please rate each statement on a scale from 1 to 6 where 1 represents Strongly Disagree and 6 represents Strongly Agree.

1. The role I play(ed) for Voltage is(was) very different from the role I play in my regular work.

2. Taking part in Voltage allows me to fulfill my desire for a creative outlet.

3. I take part in Voltage primarily to network with other professionals in my community.

4. I take part in Voltage primarily to gain experience and boost my resume.

5. Taking part in Voltage allows me to fulfill my desire to share my knowledge and experience with others in my community.

6. I intend to be involved with Voltage again in the future.
Appendix B

Copy of Qualitative Email Survey Distributed for Study

Hello again!

I know you received an email from me earlier tonight regarding some feedback for Voltage, but I have a special request for you. Perhaps you remember the meeting we attended in March when Anna asked us to share why we are involved with Voltage and what we hope to get out of our involvement. I took notes that day and you responded – “insert individual response “.

Now that we have made it through the show and have had some time to unwind, I would like to raise some questions to you again.

Do you feel that your reason for getting involved with Voltage was fulfilled? Why or Why not?

Do you intend to be involved with Voltage again? Why or Why not?
Appendix C

Individual Results for Quantitative Survey

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