

## 4) Volunteer Development

One of the key elements for any successful organization is leadership renewal. Few people want to lead a Chapter for a long period of time. Most, however, will take a job if it has defined limits (i.e., a one or two-year term).

### REFLECTION AND RECRUITMENT

Consequently, a good Chapter always is on the lookout for committed volunteers and has a pool of “helpers” who are learning and becoming involved as they participate. Some of the techniques to find and involve new people include:

- **Reviewing** potential volunteer candidates and opportunities periodically by:
  - gathering names of people in the area. MIT can provide lists of alumni who have a history of volunteering for MIT (i.e. Club volunteers might consider some involvement in Chapter service)
  - assembling and using job descriptions for various Chapter jobs, including tasks and time involvement
  - promoting opportunities via various media such as newsletters, handouts at events, etc.
  - providing a check-off box on all mailings for people who are interested in volunteering
  - distributing handouts at all events inviting indications of interest in helping, suggesting program ideas, and for address updates
  - listing on the Alumni Association Volunteer Opportunities Bulletin Board where all Chapter leaders are welcome to post available positions
- **Calling** on a regular basis to non-involved people and inviting them to help out
- **Utilizing** a welcoming committee at all events for new members—officers plus a few volunteers:
  - use identifiable ribbons on their badges
  - use identifying marks for new members—different colored dots on badges
  - keep a list of frequent attendees, cultivate them and invite to do a task such as helping with next event—then be sure that they are recognized

### Program Planning Event

Annually, invite everyone to a program planning event in the late spring. Publicize this event broadly via the newsletter, email list, Web page, phone calls, etc.

- **Hold** it at a friendly, easy-to-get-to place, and offer refreshments (i.e., a buffet dinner, pizza, sandwiches)
- **Welcome** newcomers while everyone is eating

- **Offer** handouts with planning notes, job descriptions, and emphasize how straightforward the planning process can be
- **Encourage** participation in a program—even as a co-chair or helper for the chair
- **Include** a list of previous/already planned events to “prime the pump”
- **Build** excitement with prizes for ideas or willingness to run an event

## READINESS

Once the volunteers have said yes, they need to know what to do and how to do it, and the Chapter can begin the process with ongoing help from the Enterprise Forum Global Office, as follows:

- The annual program planning event is a start, for, in addition to ideas, it should focus on the process. Handouts and opening remarks should focus on the “how-to’s” (see Organizing an MIT Enterprise Forum Chapter Event section):
  - how to generate ideas for events;
  - how to plan and arrange details involved before, during, and after an event;
  - how to find an appropriate location.
- Job Descriptions are important, especially for officers and committee chairs, but also for committee members and other assistants. They should be current, clear, and thorough, so volunteers know what to expect. They should also include a sense of time involvement, in order to gauge the extent of the commitment needed. See the generic volunteer job description section for an example.
- The Association “Board Training” program for Chapter officers and Boards is a PowerPoint presentation that provides the “tools” so that volunteers and Chapters can be both self-sufficient and successful. Ideally this training should be done annually, or bi-annually where Chapters have two-year officer terms. Enterprise Forum Global Staff can provide further information and schedule a training session.
- The semi-annual Chapter Leadership Meeting is important, also. These workshops (one in Spring and one at MIT in the Fall held in conjunction with the Alumni Leadership Conference) allow Global Office to provide the same information to all attending Chapter leaders at the same time. Leaders can also compare notes and share ideas with each other. It is important to have your Chapter represented, so that information about training and programs can be brought back and put to use.

## **RETENTION**

Keeping and renewing volunteers will be easier if the Chapter has momentum, which it should have if it follows procedures, encourages new ideas, ensures people know what to do, and spreads the work over many shoulders.

Ideally, the Chapter Chair or Vice Chair's chief responsibility should be volunteer management, not program-planning or newsletter editing, although these sometimes happen, too. Keeping track of volunteers should enable the Chapter Chair to know when one needs help; whether it be a "how to" or another pair of hands to share the load. Emphasizing training, supportive efforts, and teamwork, all the while keeping an eye out for new member resources, can be time-consuming. If done correctly and consistently, the volunteers will have the motivation and ability to do their jobs, the Chapter will function well as a whole, and everyone will share in its success. Asking people to do a specific task, related to their interests and time availability, encourages sharing of work, brings new ideas and abilities together, and forges strong bonds of commitment.

## **RECOGNITION**

Once someone performs a task, recognize them for it, and make the format of the recognition appropriate to the task. A sincere, public thank you at a Chapter event is important to those who worked behind the scenes to put the meeting together. A memento serves as a special thank you for a larger effort, or recognizes the volunteer stepping down from office. The MIT Enterprise Forum Global Office can provide templates for certificates which add a prestigious touch to the occasion.

These items need to be thought through in advance, and, if necessary, built into the budget. The best are creative and fun, as well as appropriate to the occasion. If the occasion is special enough, hold the recognition until it can be presented by a visitor from MIT— a staff member or senior officer, or perhaps a Faculty member. All are willing and enthusiastic participants, and their presence should serve to enhance the presentation.

In addition, there is the range of Association awards, for which nomination may be made through the Enterprise Forum Global Staff. Awards are considered during the Winter by the Alumni Association Awards Committee, and are presented at the Alumni Leadership Conference in the Fall. Annually, Chapter Chairs will receive information about the awards as well as nominations to Enterprise Forum officers, and all Chapters are strongly urged to send in recommendations and nominations.

All in all, with good volunteer management, your Chapter will have a bright future. The Enterprise Forum Global Office will do all it can to assist you to make that management process work.

## SUCCESSION MANAGEMENT

For the long term health of your Chapter, it is absolutely vital that your Chapter's leadership pay significant attention to succession management.

As indicated earlier in this section, volunteer management should be the primary responsibility of the Chapter Chair and/or Vice Chair. Often the Vice Chair will chair the Nominating Committee, which should be a year-round, standing committee of the Chapter, always on the lookout for new volunteer potential.

Establishing a Chapter structure that builds levels for new volunteer development and training is important. Many boards falter in leadership succession when the Chapter relies on just a few key officers to get all the work done. Building a variety of committees, with both short-term assignments and longer term leadership positions, will help to establish a pipeline for future leaders. Even in the smallest Chapters, for example, the VC of Programs should not take it upon him/herself to organize each event, but should instead delegate some of the work to willing volunteers, provide training, and communicate to other Chapter leaders about jobs well done.

Keeping records of your volunteers is important so that you have a ready record of your volunteers' interests, the activities/responsibilities they carried out, as well as their basic contact information. In fact, strong record-keeping is important for overall volunteer management. Using the MIT Enterprise Forum, Inc. Annual Report as a guideline, volunteers should keep accurate records of events, their attendees, members, etc. If accurate records are passed along to new volunteers, less time will be spent in the frustration of "recreating the wheel" and more time will be spent on developing a vision and carrying out activities.

Discussing succession with volunteers on a regular basis is also important. Planning with a volunteer how they wish to move up the Chapter's leadership ladder — from a committee member, to committee chair, to Assistant VC, to Vice Chair, etc. — is a useful way to help the volunteer better understand the Chapter structure and the opportunities available to them. In addition, you can consult with Enterprise Forum Global Office to help volunteers and leaders plan for further succession, onto Enterprise Forum Board and committees, Association Boards and the MIT Corporation. Showing volunteers future opportunities can help to enhance the appeal of current volunteer jobs.

Please take a moment to look at the suggested Chapter structure charts and volunteer job descriptions located in this toolkit.

**Volunteer Job Description**  
**(MIT Enterprise Forum of \_\_\_\_\_)**  
**Title: CHAPTER CHAIR**

***General Description:***

The Chapter Chair is the chief officer of the Chapter, setting annual objectives and goals and ensuring achievement of said goals.

***Specific Tasks/Duties:***

- Convenes, sets agenda and presides over all Board Meetings
- Supervises the Vice Chairs and ensures that their plans are carried out effectively
- Selects committees and appoints chairs
- Acts as the primary liaison with the MIT Enterprise Forum Global Office
- Completes Alumni Association Annual Report
- Attends semi-annual Chapter Leadership Meetings or ensures Chapter participation.

***Expected Outcomes:***

- A goal of \_\_\_\_\_ dues-paying members is set for FY\_\_\_\_.
- A goal of \_\_\_\_\_ events is set for FY\_\_\_\_.
- A goal of \_\_\_\_\_ volunteers is set for FY\_\_\_\_.
- The Board of Directors must meet at least 4 times annually, with a minimum of \_\_\_\_\_members.

***Training & Support:***

- The Chapter Chair reports to the MIT Enterprise Forum, Inc. Board of Directors.
- The Chapter Chair will receive training from the immediate past Chapter Chair.
- The Chapter Chair may seek consultative advice & guidance from the Enterprise Forum Global Office.

***Time Commitment:***

The Chapter Chair position requires a time commitment of 4 to 6 hours per week.

***Qualifications:***

The Chapter Chair must be a current member of the Chapter. Prior leadership in the Chapter at the VC level is preferred. Multiple local MIT alumni/entrepreneur contacts in the area and strong networking skills are helpful.

***Benefits:***

High visibility position with MIT Enterprise Forum Chapter. Access to MIT materials for Chapter Officers.

**Volunteer Job Description**  
**(MIT Enterprise Forum of \_\_\_\_\_)**  
**Title: VICE CHAIR OF MEMBERSHIP**

***General Description:***

The Vice Chair of Membership establishes and executes an annual membership solicitation plan for the recruitment and retention of dues-paying members.

***Specific Tasks/Duties:***

- Recruits & trains volunteers for the Membership Committee
- Convenes, sets agenda and presides over Membership Committee Meetings
- Along with other Chapter leaders and Membership Committee, sets annual goal for dues-paying members
- Prepares annual membership renewal and acquisition appeal letters & forms, plans for member form inclusion in other Chapter communications such as newsletter or email listserv, submits budget requirements for mailing and projection of income to Treasurer
- Regularly provides the Enterprise Forum Global Office with lists of dues-paying members and address updates

***Expected Outcomes:***

A goal of \_\_\_\_\_ dues-paying members is set for FY\_\_\_\_. The Membership Committee must meet at least 4 times annually, with a minimum of \_\_\_\_\_members.

***Training & Support:***

- The VC of Membership is a direct report to the Chapter Chair.
- The VC of Membership will receive training from the prior VC, along with assistance from the Chapter Chair and Treasurer.
- The VC of Membership may seek consultative advice & guidance from Enterprise Forum Global Office.
- Member updates are sent to Marilyn Finlay <mfinlay@mit.edu>.

***Report Dates:***

The VC of Membership is expected to deliver a verbal/written membership status report at Board Meetings to be held on the following dates:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Should he/she be unable to attend, a written report must be submitted.

***Time Commitment:***

The VC of Membership position requires a time commitment of 3 to 5 hours per week.

***Qualifications:***

The VC of Membership must be a current member of the Chapter. A general understanding of direct mail/member solicitation is preferred. Multiple alumni contacts in the area and strong networking skills are helpful.

***Benefits:***

High visibility position with MIT Enterprise Forum Chapter. Access to MIT materials for Chapter Officers. Position normally succeeds to VC of Programs or Vice Chair.

**Volunteer Job Description**  
**(MIT Enterprise Forum of \_\_\_\_\_)**  
**Title: VICE CHAIR OF PROGRAMS**

***General Description:***

The Vice Chair of Programs establishes and executes an annual program plan for the number and type of events the Chapter will host.

***Specific Tasks/Duties:***

- Recruits & trains volunteers for the Program Committee(s) and subcommittees as needed
- Convenes, sets agenda and presides over Program Committee Meetings
- Along with other Chapter leaders and Program Committee, sets annual goals for the number and type of events the Chapter will hold
- Annually submits requests for MIT faculty speakers to the Enterprise Forum Global Office
- Prepares any event announcements as needed, submits budget requirements for events and projection of income to Treasurer
- Annually provides the Alumni Association with lists of events and the number of attendees of each event

***Expected Outcomes:***

A goal of \_\_\_\_\_ events is set for FY\_\_\_\_. The Program Committee must meet at least 4 times annually, with a minimum of \_\_\_\_\_members.

***Training & Support:***

- The VC of Programs is a direct report to the Chapter Chair
- The VC of Programs will receive training from the prior VC, along with assistance from the Chapter Chair and Treasurer.
- The VC of Programs may seek consultative advice & guidance from the Enterprise Forum Global Office.

***Report Dates:***

The VC of Programs is expected to deliver a verbal/written report of both past (results) and upcoming (plans) events at Board Meetings to be held on the following dates: \_\_\_\_\_.

Should he/she be unable to attend, a written report must be submitted.

***Time Commitment:***

The VC of Programs position requires a time commitment of 3 to 5 hours per week.

***Qualifications:***

The VC of Programs must be a current member of the Chapter. Past planning experience of an MIT Chapter or Club event is preferred. Multiple alumni contacts in the area and strong networking skills are helpful.

***Benefits:***

High visibility position with MIT Enterprise Forum Chapter. Access to MIT materials for Chapter Officers. Position normally succeeds to VC of Membership or Vice Chair.

# Volunteer Job Description Worksheet

**Position Title:**

*(Remember the word “volunteer” is a pay category, not a title!)*

**Description of the Project/Purpose of Assignment:**

**Outline of Volunteer’s Responsibilities or List of Tasks:**

**Outcomes/Goals:**

*How will you and the volunteer know that the job is being done well, or that the project is successful?*

**Training and Support Plan:**

*How will the volunteer be prepared for the work? Who will supervise/be the contact point?*

**Reporting:**

*What reports will be expected, in what form, and how often?*

**Time Commitment:**

*Minimum hours per week/month? On any special schedule? For what duration of time?*

**Qualifications Needed:**

**Benefits:**

*What will the volunteer get in exchange for service (tangibles and intangibles)?*