



My View

"I'LL MAKE THE TIME"

The phrase "*I'll make the time*" is music to my ears. They are words I've heard over and over from day one in TIP. In fact without people willing to make the time for TIP, TIP wouldn't exist. The history of TIP is a history of busy people stepping up and deciding to carve out time for TIP from their busy schedules. For years I have witnessed (and respected) very busy people make time for TIP. I know a TIP volunteer who is a single parent, has a demanding job, and takes care of her elderly father. She nevertheless makes the time for TIP. And she is just one example of hundreds of TIP members who don't really have the time for TIP but create the time.

I believe as a nonprofit organization which is dependent on people volunteering their time, we need to have a belief and an understanding of time as a something others decide to give us rather than as something they either have or don't have. I've had to learn as a leader not to assume that very busy people don't have time for TIP or that very busy volunteers don't want to give even more of their time. I've learned that the busiest people will make time for what they consider worthwhile. I try never to think or say "*Oh, she is too busy to help with that.*" Let's face it, TIP is competing for people's time. There are hundreds of ways outside of TIP where they can spend their time. Our goal should not be to find the people who "have the time" but to be an organization where even those who don't seem to have the time will make it for us. We need to be experts at influencing people to make time for us.

What kind of organization moves people who don't have the time to people who make the time? How do we as an organization need to behave to influence others to give us their most valuable resource...their time? I think people will make time for TIP....

....If we articulate clearly and consistently how spending time **volunteering for TIP is worthwhile** and makes a huge difference. It's not enough to occasionally say to volunteers "*you are all making a difference*". We need to regularly and on an ongoing basis make our "*you are making a difference*" rhetoric specific and concrete. Our volunteers at all levels need to hear and read about how grateful our customers (clients and emergency responders) are for what we do. Therefore TIP leaders must continually garner feedback from our customers and then get that feedback out to all of those "making the time" for TIP.

....If we are a place where **volunteers can learn and grow**. TIP needs to be in many ways the University of TIP. We need to continually learn from what we do and share that learning. We need to acknowledge our mistakes and learn from them. And we need to be a place where we

push up volunteers to do things that stretch them, and that they wouldn't have the opportunity to do elsewhere.

.....If we do what it takes to help **volunteers feel that they belong** to an organization which knows them as individuals and respects them. And we need to operate a "crack outfit" that our volunteers are proud to belong to. Being an organization which helps volunteers feel that they belong sounds easy, but it's not. It takes veterans who welcome newcomers with open arms, and it takes leaders who do not take veterans for granted. And it means that leaders need to establish individual relationships with volunteers.

In short, TIP volunteering is difficult and only a small percentage of the population even considers doing it. It's been my observation that most TIP Volunteers are very busy people who on the face of it really don't have the time for TIP. But they will make the time for us if we demonstrate that we are doing worthwhile work, if we challenge them and if we are a place where they feel they belong.

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Wayne would like to hear your thoughts.
Email him at Tipincceo@aol.com