

**ORGANIZATION OF VOLUNTEERS' FREE TIME IN SOCHI 2014
AS A WAY TO INFLUENCE THEIR WORK**

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The article is devoted to the analysis of Olympic volunteers' spare time and process of its organization as a way to influence work. It determines the advantages and drawbacks of this process and offers some recommendations to improve it in the future.

Russia was the host of the Twenty-second Olympic Winter Games in Sochi this year and it was the greatest event which gave a lot of unforgettable emotions to everyone. Being a volunteer of the Games, the author of the present paper has researched the organizational process of Olympic volunteers' spare time and its influence on their work describing the process as a participant and as an outside observer.

The objective of this research is to cover the process of volunteers' free time management during the Games, define the drawbacks of the organization and make possible recommendations to improve a similar process.

Any Olympic Games is a grand event. Its organizing and conducting demands an incredible amount of efforts and resources including workforce. It is common knowledge that one of the traditions of the Games is to involve volunteers, who share the Olympic values and are ready to work for the idea and impressions. Sochi Games were not an exception and they involved 25 000 volunteers from different areas of Russia and other countries.

Depending on the object of the work (sport venue, transport, Olympic village) volunteers had different schedules and accommodation (Morosko, Omega, Aqua-Loo, Teremok) and in spite of the enormous volume of the work done, there were constant entertainment programs for volunteers in each of those places which aimed at organizing volunteers' free time with the further objective to improve their work.

The official supplier of the Olympic Games *English First* organized and provided English training sessions in an interactive and playful way. Its activity resulted in 3 main advantages:

- extending volunteers' outlook
- gaining experience of team work
- improving communication skills in English, that is absolutely necessary in today's cross-border community.

The next activity block was represented by guitar, board games evenings and such-like activities contributing to the atmosphere and inspiration the volunteers could bring into the Olympics.

– *Guitar evenings* made the atmosphere of children's summer camps and students' hikes that joins people together and removes barriers in communication.

– Such *shows and contests* as “Sochi Got Talents”, “Guess the Melody” raised the spirits and gave a chance of having a good time.

– *Playing board games* was a good way to amuse people, to make them laugh.

Another aspect of volunteers' free time organization could be presented in the way of a *joint screening of the Olympic Games*. In spite of the constant overtime work volunteers still had an opportunity of watching some sport competitions due to the continuous broadcast of the Games to big screens located in dining rooms and hall accommodations. That created a feeling of dynamics of the all-consuming Games and inexpressible mood.

A board of cities – a special map, where everybody could mark his own city and see where other volunteers came from, showed the grand scale of the Olympic event.

One more way to influence work and not only during the Olympic Games is the *rating of the spirit*. It can be described as a system where any volunteer could share his mood through three kinds of smileys (happy, sad and neutral). People voted by any card they liked and explained their choice. That helped to reveal negative moments and eliminate them.

Finally, *trainings and seminars* organized for volunteers aimed at personal efficiency, developing interpersonal skills and psychology.

The management of volunteers' off hours during the Olympic Winter Games in Sochi is a good example of the free time management as an effective method of motivation and a great way to maintain a friendly climate and positive atmosphere.

When an employee, in our case a volunteer, feels comfortable, if he is not a featureless worker but a personality he begins working with more enthusiasm, feeling that his work is important for the whole team, as well as the activity of all other team members for him. In that way a united team can achieve any aim faster and simpler.

Analyzing some of the disadvantages of organization volunteers' off hours, the author points out:

1. Not quite a successful placement of volunteers' accommodation. Some of volunteers spent 2-3 hours on the way to their workplace. Actually, this was the free time, possible to have been spent in a more interesting and useful way, therefore organizers should have taken into account the distance between the place of residence and the object of the work.

2. The time of entertainment programs announcement. Sometimes notices had been put only 1-2 hours before the activity started. So many volunteers even did not know about it and missed entertaining events, hence they should have been informed in a good time.

3. An organized excursion. The volunteers who came to Sochi from all over the world had a desire to take part in an organized tour of remarkable sights of the city and the neighboring district, but it left unfulfilled.

The free time management can and even must be used in different companies to improve the work efficiency of the employees, especially for outdoor events, when workers spend time together and make informal acquaintances of each other. It is also important to remember that the choice of participation in a suggested entertainment program should be entirely voluntary, because forced participation brings only harm both to workers and the company.

In conclusion, the organization of workers' free time can contribute to creating a united team that leads to improving organizational environment and may result in the quality of the company's work on the whole.

Literature

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