Did you ever ask yourself what you should not do when managing volunteers? Here are some tips on what we should avoid and rather do to make volunteering a positive experience.

Don't …	Rather Do …
Don't assume that volunteers understand the impact of their work, why they are doing it, or what they are supposed to be working on.	Make sure you communicate clearly with your volunteers- take the first 5-10 minutes of your volunteer event to assign tasks, and let volunteers know the significance of their actions for the community
Don't assume that all volunteers know one another.	Take the time during that first 5-10 minutes for everyone to introduce each other, and perhaps incorporate an ice-breaker
Don't make all the decisions on what kind of activities your group will take part in.	Make sure you are receiving regular input from members on what kinds of activities they would like to work on, and make your best effort to include these activities in your group's volunteer schedule.
Don't overwork or overload your volunteers, particularly those that always show up and put in a lot of effort.	Have a conversation with "frequent flyer" volunteers about how they are doing, if they are feeling overworked, and how you can make volunteering a better experience. This may involve scheduling those people less, or taking on less volunteer commitments in the future.
Don't allow the organization to become "One leader dependent" leaving others to stand by and act as "rubber stamps".	Make sure there is delegation. Gives others tasks that would usually be reserved for those at the top, or cycle-out leadership positions.
Don't let the work your volunteers are doing go unnoticed or untracked.	Keep track of metrics for each volunteer activity, and present volunteers with these metrics. For example, on a trash pick-up day, keep track of the number of trash bags collected. This will give volunteers a sense of accomplishment
Don't let your volunteers go unrewarded.	Reward volunteers through incentives or through positive reinforcement. Recognition can go a long way in encouraging volunteers.

Don't leave people out of the communication loop.	Set up a group-chat, e-mail chain, Facebook group, or some other form of communication to stay in touch and bond with volunteers.
Don't make a volunteer feel bad if they were not able to follow through in the past.	Let volunteers know they are welcome whenever they are able to contribute time. Remember, communication is key!
Don't have your volunteers doing the same thing for too long; this can lead to burn out.	Change it up! Find a new activity, community, or organization to volunteer with. There is no shortage of need for volunteers, and a change of pace can be healthy for an organization, as well as for volunteers.
Don't allow passive volunteers to affect the rest of the group.	Be encouraging to those who are working hard, and challenge those who are not (yet).
Don't let your group become ineffective or inefficient.	Make sure you are organized! This ensures that your organization runs smoothly, and that you are not wasting anyone's time. Organization involves being on-time, having the proper tools for a volunteering event, and keeping track of metrics.

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