

UV Disco Sabers

Celine Fucci
Jee Hyun Kim
Youssef Saab

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TOPIC EXPLANATION

Exploratory research is a method for gathering detailed insight in order to narrow down a design direction and to build a relationship with stakeholders. It's essential that we do this for our brief to evaluate the expansive volunteerism market.

GOALS

1. Identify key characteristics and market trends
2. Identify the target audience
3. Supply key metrics

EXPECTED OUTCOME

We expect to identify what the emerging trends are so that we can take proper action when it comes to designing our volunteer platform. Additionally, we would like to have an idea of who the leading competitors are in the market so that we can learn what they do well and what can be improved. By identifying the gaps in the marketplace, we expect to build our platform accordingly.

NEW/EMERGING INDUSTRY TRENDS

According to LiveinIt.com, a Volunteering organization Volunteers are now given training on the task they are doing weeks ahead of time to prep them for the workload ahead.

From observations made such as in the nycservice.gov website and as written on LiveinIt.com volunteers are now asked to list skills they can bring to the table or any tech experience they might bring to the table. Lots of people are volunteering their professions such as nursing or construction and were even recommended on pro bono Australia as a way to practice and develop necessary skill sets.

LEAD COMPETITORS & WHAT MAKES THEM SUCCESSFUL

Deed and VolunteerMatch. According to industry insights made by VerfidVolunteer.com for 2019 here is what market success looks like. The reason why deed and Volunteer match have success according to market research, they Offer user the ability to choose how much time they volunteer which as shown 13% of the market gives more than 5 hours while the rest give less than that so having the choice to volunteer a chosen amount of time is be beneficial. Also, 54% of the market liked to know how they can help in their area all these being things that Deed and Volunteer match did well and last but not least 87% of the market liked to be able to search for the opportunity which is a feature Both of them excelled at ([Source](#)).

APPROACHING COMPETITORS/TRENDS

According to Eric Burger the marketing communications manager for VolunteerHub, Creating a streamline a quick way for volunteers is a must, and having one increases recruitment also that's where communication information can be collected which is a must

for keeping volunteers. How is this different from last year? In 2020 optimization and digital trends are improving how people interact with nonprofits and volunteering as a whole ([Source](#)).

MARKET SATURATION

The current volunteering marketplace consists of different participating groups like non-profit organizations, NGOs, and organizations run by government sectors. The volunteer services operated by the city such as the [volunteer website run by Jersey City](#) is an example of government-run organizations. The current marketplace for volunteering is heavily saturated as nonprofit organizations contribute heavily to the statistics. According to the [statistics from VolunteerHub](#), there are more than 1.8million active nonprofits in the U.S. alone.

With the current situation with the COVID-19, offering an option to volunteer virtually with flexible hours can be implemented in our platform. Also, it would be nice to follow the [emerging trend](#) such as offering pre-matched skills to the work needed by the volunteer in a flexible manner. Implementing skill inputs by the user would not only save time in training for both the organization and the user but also allow users with specific skill sets to merge their daily lives into volunteering work seamlessly.

DOMAIN/INDUSTRY TARGET AUDIENCE

According to the research done in 2019 by [Sterling Volunteers](#), 30.7% of the Baby Boomers (~80 million) volunteers view volunteering as a part of their career-driven lifestyle. For Generation X (~65 million) although the numbers are smaller compared to the other generations, 36.4% volunteers which makes up more than a third of the entire Gen X. When it comes to the Millennials engaging volunteer activity, only 28.2% of ~83 million have participated. It is reported in the Sterling Volunteers that Millennials want to see the impact of their actions taking place and that they want to create their own parameters that are defined based on flexibility and ability. Lastly, Generation Z (~76million) is the youngest among all generations, in which 26.1% have previously volunteered. The key takeaway for Gen Z is that the average of them have received their first cell phone at age 10.3 ([Source](#)).

By observing the volunteers across the four generations, the age range of our target audiences is 20-35, a mixture between the Millennials and Gen Z. The report by Sterling Volunteers is an important factor to consider as the goal is to have the generations that least volunteers to become more involved.

HOW EXISTING COMPETITORS DEFINE THEIR AUDIENCE

One existing direct competitor, GiveGab, based out of Ithaca, NY defines their target audience as “**people that don’t volunteer as much** because they see it as a super-serious thing that will suck up all their time...GiveGab has set out to increase volunteering worldwide by developing software and a social network that helps nonprofits, communities, and volunteers manage and promote their efforts.” GiveGab basically “offers a social space, where people and organizations can connect and share.”

[Golden](#) has a similar target audience - people in general. On their “About” page, they state, “let's eliminate the hurdles that prevent **any person** from participating and contributing.”

On the other hand, Involver states that their “demographic of users is really made up of the younger generation, 18-25 years old.” This data is important because unlike other platforms, Involver brings together humanitarians through gamification. “Involver’s gamified mobile app also enables better volunteer engagement where users earn badges and progress in levels for doing good ([Source](#)).” Ultimately, if we want to encourage younger audiences to volunteer, gamification may be a valid method.

Charity Miles, an app that promotes volunteering through health and fitness, claims that people who exercise and like to help others comprise their target audience. Here’s some back story: “Charity Miles was designed to be a marketing platform so companies could spend money that would otherwise be spent on mobile advertising, Facebook and Twitter advertising and instead could be used to help find a way to cure Parkinson’s Disease ([Source](#)).” Specifically, the founder of Charity Miles, Gene Gurkoff, started the platform in honor of his grandfather, who had Parkinson’s. When iPhones came out, Gene thought that he could use an app to get people like himself together, so that companies would sponsor them. Basically, all this matters because Gene saw similarities between mission-driven people and people who care about their health, which is why the target audience for Charity Miles is people who like to help others and exercise. For our project

brief, if we can connect with a specific group of goal-oriented people who like to help others, that would make our app more marketable ([Source](#)).

All in all, it seems that the commonality between these four platforms is the fact that their target audiences are pretty open. Besides Involver specifying a popular age group (18-25), all platforms are primarily targeting people who don't volunteer as much. The most logical reason as to why this is the main target audience is because volunteer organizations want a diverse group of volunteers and they want to be able to make an impact on everyone's lives ([Source](#)). Additionally, they could be targeting people who don't volunteer as much because it's harder to get people to re-volunteer for something ([Source](#)).

EXISTING QUALITATIVE & QUANTITATIVE DATA

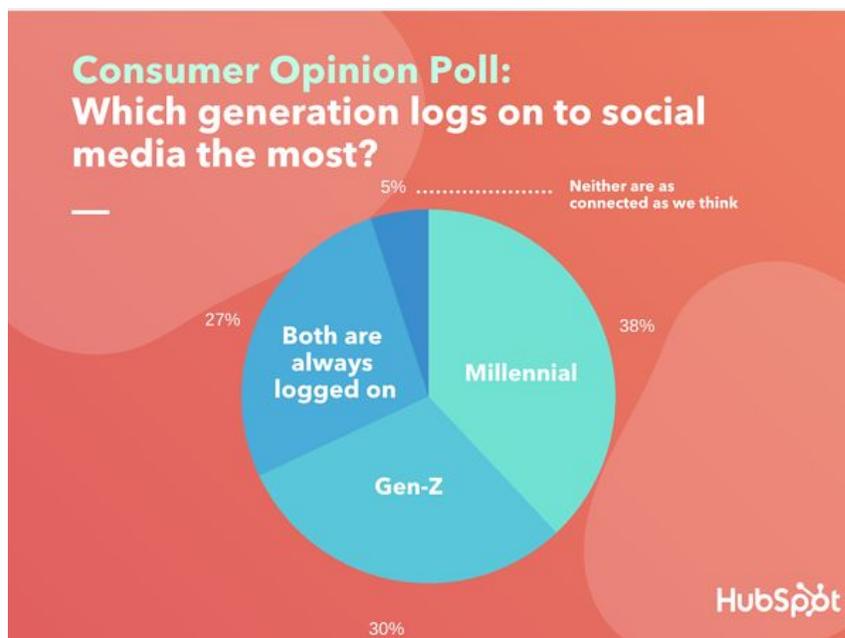
- Women volunteer at higher rates (27.8%) than men (21.8%).
- 35-44 & 45-54 are most likely to volunteer while 20-24-year-olds have the lowest rates, which may explain why the "Involver" app above aims to target younger folks.
- Location wise, Dubai is an apt market considering its large volunteering community, who are also avid smartphone users ([Source](#)).
- When it comes to younger people, career goals usually outweigh desires to volunteer ([Source](#)).
- "The most enthusiastic volunteers tend to keep volunteering because they've found a way to bring together two things: the satisfaction of doing good for other people along with gaining something for themselves."
- 42.1% of people became volunteers with their main organization after being asked to volunteer.
- 67% of people found volunteer opportunities online in 2014 when compared to 34% in 2006.
- The most-reported volunteer activity (11.3%) in 2015 was food preparation and distribution.
- According to research done [by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2016](#) (the most recent year available), those most likely to volunteer were Generation X (people ages 35-44) and Baby Boomers (ages 45-54) tied at around 28%. While the lowest volunteer rates were seen among Millennials (ages 20-34) at 18%. Leaving Generation Z (people ages 15-19) solidly in the middle at 26%.

PROJECT DIRECTION

Looking at the research, it seems that having a mobile app would be best. This would make the volunteering platform cater to a wider net of audiences. Let's start with Gen X - these are folks around the ages of 35-54, and they are most likely to volunteer. "Their online time is driven by purpose, rather than entertainment, when compared to younger generations." They still use mobile devices to browse the internet ([Source](#)), which is why a mobile app would suit them. And since they're using these mobile devices to specifically browse the Internet, rather than download apps, it would make sense for us to have a web presence.

Having a mobile app would also cater to Gen Z folks, since "95% of 13-to 17-year-olds have access to a smartphone, and a similar share (97%) use at least one of seven major online platforms to get in on the volunteering game since they're frequently on their phones ([Source](#))."

As for millennials, according to HubSpot, they're logged on to social media just as much as Gen Z ([Source](#)). Furthermore, Mobile Marketer claims, "it's estimated that 94% of millennials will be smartphone users in 2019 ([Source](#))." These sources provide valid reasons for why a mobile device would be a beneficial form to take for our volunteering brief.



Lastly, the device type/platform is an important consideration. According to a report by [Device Atlas](#) in 2019, Apple is dominating the US market. Meanwhile, the Samsung Galaxy S8 appears in the 9/12 spot, with a 2.98% market share. Although Apple is dominating the market, if we want to cast our net far, designing for Android would be crucial as well. I think a good tactic would be to design for Apple first, evaluate how our app is doing, then move on to designing for Android.

SOURCES

Source	Link	Question Number
In It Live	https://www.initlive.com/blog/4-volunteer-management-trends-for-2020	1
NYC Service	https://www.nycservice.org/organizations/index.php?org_id=3301	1
Volunteer U	https://volunteeru.org/6-volunteering-trends-to-watch-in-2020/	1
Volunteer Match	https://www.volunteermatch.org/	1
AmeriCorps	https://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/ Americorps	1
NYC Service	https://www.nycservice.org/search/	1
Deed	https://www.joindeed.com/	1
GiveGab	https://www.givegab.com/	1
Volunteer Jersey City	https://volunteer.jerseycity.nj.gov/#s	4
Volunteer Hub	https://www.volunteerhub.com/blog/25-volunteer-statistics/	4

Volunteer U	https://volunteeru.org/6-volunteering-trends-to-watch-in-2020/	4
Sterling Volunteers	https://www.sterlingvolunteers.com/blog/2019/04/engaging-volunteers-across-generations/	5
Volunteer Hub	https://www.volunteerhub.com/blog/25-volunteer-statistics/	5
The Renewal Project	https://www.therenewalproject.com/7-apps-you-can-download-to-help-others/	6
Forbes	https://www.forbes.com/sites/kerryflynn/2014/07/03/finally-an-app-for-volunteering/#6d13949b3a54	6
Kathy Hatch Portfolio	https://kathylhatch.com/home/portfolio/charity-miles/	6
The Entrepreneur	https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/270827	6
Nonprofit Source	https://nonprofitsource.com/online-giving-statistics/volunteering-statistics/	7
Volunteer Hub	https://www.volunteerhub.com/blog/25-volunteer-statistics/	7
CNN	https://www.cnn.com/2019/06/04/us/volunteering-statistics-united-states-america-cfc/index.html	7
Sterling Volunteers	https://www.sterlingvolunteers.com/blog/2019/04/engaging-volunteers-across-generations/	7

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