

Helping the YMCA, Salvation Army & Meals for NHS do more with less



The UK had never seen a volunteer mobilisation quite like it. As lockdown loomed, an army of people stepped up, eager to prepare food parcels, deliver medication, drop off shopping, mow the neighbour's lawn or make scrubs for the NHS. Now, all they needed was a system that could organise them all, so all that resource was put to good use and none of the goodwill was lost.

"Before, we were spending about an hour a day scheduling our volunteers. After HireHand it was no more than 10–20 mins a week."

VOLUNTEER MANAGER,
FOOD FOR ALL

Doing (much) more with (much) less

In March 2020, the UK government launched its NHS/GoodSAM app, to great fanfare. Designed to match volunteers with opportunities, 750,000 applications followed. But after just five days recruitment was paused. Numbers volunteering exceeded demand. Volunteers complained they had been given nothing to do. Yet charities still reported that they needed more volunteers.

HireHand's volunteer platform launched to rather less fanfare. By

late March, around 4,500 people had registered on the platform. But each HireHand volunteer did 4 x the work.

The difference was apparently small but absolutely critical: HireHand's matching algorithm, used to pair volunteers with opportunities, understands flexibility. The algorithm was built around the real lives of volunteers. It knew that those who were coming forward had other commitments to fit around their

volunteering. They were workers and carers. Many were unable to travel great distances, so they needed family-friendly shifts in their neighbourhood. Some wanted work they could do from home or which was less strenuous. And many had only a few hours to give - but wanted to give them anyway.

"We will always fill the largest possible number of shifts"

Scott Erwin
FOUNDER & CEO,
HIREHAND



4 x shift coverage per person

The HireHand app factored in all those volunteer preferences together with skills, location, availability, task preferences and more. Then it matched volunteers to opportunities. The charities using the app found matching at scale was simple, with large numbers of volunteers able to be mobilised quickly. That proved especially valuable for tasks that were informal, and did not require specific training, such as meal packaging. Each task was logged by charities on a dedicated web-based dashboard.

The results were impressive:

- ✓ HireHand mobilised its volunteers to complete 48,000 hours of work and 12,130 shifts
- ✓ The software successfully filled shifts for 63 charities including the YMCA, Meals for NHS, The Salvation Army and South Central Ambulance Service
- ✓ Shift lengths were typically around 4 hours, but the app placed many volunteers who asked for shifts as short as 2 hours
- ✓ The software's success saw more than 1.2 million meals delivered to the vulnerable

"Volunteers just love this. They love the ease of use. They're no longer dragged into endless Messenger and WhatsApp groups."

Fiona Thompson
HIREHAND

Great for charities

Onboarding was done in minutes and is intuitively simple. That meant next to no time lost to training and familiarisation with the software.

For charity managers, HireHand turned the job of scheduling volunteer shifts from the most onerous job of the week to a 10-20 minute task. On a broader scale, the data received from the app highlighted where the gaps in resource lay for each charity, enabling them to target recruitment. And when a volunteer couldn't make a shift – even at short notice - HireHand was able to automatically arrange a replacement.

Great for volunteers

No charity wants to force or coerce its volunteers, because it wants them to remain happy to volunteer. HireHand is built on HireHand's tech, which was designed with volunteer choice and agency at its core. For the volunteers using it, that meant getting a shift was incredibly easy, but getting out of it was too.

Because they knew the software would find the best cover for them, there was no guilt. No feelings of obligation. And no endless chat groups conversations and trading Wednesday afternoons for Saturday mornings.

Ready for ramping up

HireHand's immediate role ended with the end of the first lockdown, but its value remains. It's ready to be ramped up again should the UK's charities need it again in an emergency situation.

It stands ready to support, for example, the vaccine programme and the teams delivering it. And it ensures that responding to such challenges is resource efficient – and keeps volunteers onboard.



"HireHand is about doing more with a smaller footprint. It's also about the ad hoc, the hard to fill and the mobilisation at scale of volunteers. That's when you need a dynamic staffing platform that can cope when shifts change or the people filling the shifts change. That's when you need real intelligence in the system."

Scott Erwin
FOUNDER & CEO,
HIREHAND