

How To Get Skilled Workers To Help You For Free

By Andrej and Karen Brummer



So you want to enhance your project, share the culture you live in and have someone help you for free?

Hi, we are Andrej and Karen Brummer, the founders of Swap Work for Travel.

Just 4 years ago we set up a small business in rural northern Laos. We quickly uncovered the huge potential for our business and personal projects, of having people from all over the world come and help us FOR FREE.

The system we used enable us to grow this business to #1 on TripAdvisor and the “Top Pick” in Lonely Planet.

This is the exact system that we are going to share with you in this ebook.

We discovered that there is an emerging new generation of travellers from around the world, who are looking for meaningful projects. Projects where they can swap their skills and time for really experiencing a culture in a way that is not possible when staying on the tourist circuit.

These travellers come from all corners of the earth, and have shared with us a wide range of skills, for free.

In exchange we provide them with somewhere to sleep, and food. In our case we found the value so huge that we rented an extra house, to accommodate the people who were willing to give their time and expertise to us in order to live like a local in a culture and country that is foreign to them.

But we'll get to that in a moment... first let us share with you how we tapped into this huge network of travellers and how we have hosted 28 different people in the past year who all worked for us or helped us on a personal project for free.

The system we use means anyone with a spare room or couch and food to share can tap into this group of people looking to donate their skills. These people all have an eagerness to travel and experience the world through the eyes of locals, so they're motivated and fun to work with.

If you have any kind of assignment that will last anywhere from a few days to years, then chances are there is someone, somewhere in the world who can help you.

So you're in the right place!

We're going to show you how Swap Work For Travel can arm you with everything you need to successfully host people who want to learn about your culture and spend time giving the gift of their talents to you.

And in return you get to share your part of the world with someone who wants to live like a local for a bit and meet new people you will never forget!

So, what exactly is Swap Work for Travel, and how does it work?

The premise is very simple.

You have a project where you need help doing something you don't have the skills or time to do by yourself. And, you're willing to share food and accommodation with someone in return for their help.

And...

Someone wants to travel, help people and experience an inside look at a culture and country that interests them. And they are willing to share their time and expertise to help your project for free.

This is called a win-win situation!

Local businesses and families, called 'Swap-Hosts' get to enhance their enterprises and their lives by leveraging skilled travellers' time and efforts.

These travellers, called 'Swappers' get to experience local life, basically for free, and feel fulfilled using their talents to help different people around the world.

And best of all you can host people for a period of time that's as long or as short as you like.

www.SwapWorkForTravel.com has been designed to match your needs to a traveller who is looking for a project needing help, somewhere in the world.

All you need to make it happen

Getting started is easier than you think! If you are someone who is looking for skilled helpers to work on your project for free, then you'll need:

1. Eagerness to share your culture with a Swapper who really wants to learn about it
2. An open heart to meet and accept all the new people and different ideas you will encounter
3. An open mind to learn about a new skill, or trust that someone can genuinely help you and make a difference in your life or project. In some cases this may mean doing things a new way, not the way you have always done them
4. Patience and a willingness to either learn the skills you wish to acquire, or explain to someone the work you need help with
5. Somewhere for your helper to sleep. Sleeping arrangements vary from Swap-Host to Swap-Host and can range from a tent in your front yard or a spare couch, to a private bedroom or a room in a local guesthouse. Some Swap-Hosts even have spare apartments or houses for their Swappers to stay in. What you offer is up to you, as long as you make it clear in your Swap-Host profile exactly what you offer.
6. A willingness to provide food for your Swapper. This can be shared meals with your family or community, fresh ingredients provided for the Swapper to cook for themselves, or you can cover the cost of meals at a local restaurant or market
7. If you have a charitable project or don't have the means to provide food and accommodation, you may still be able to become a Swap-Host, by charging your Swappers a small fee to cover the costs associated with providing these. You should NOT make a profit if you charge a fee. After all the Swapper is already working for you for free. Don't take advantage of them!
8. A positive attitude and willingness to share some time with a Swapper who wants to learn about your local area and culture

Now we're going to teach you how to discover the areas in your project that could benefit from having a Swapper share their skills with you in exchange for a mutually rewarding experience.

Here are the exact steps you need to take to become a Swap-Host and have Swappers contacting you to let them help you for free

Step 1: Define your project.

Make a list of everything you can think of that you'd love to have help with. Don't be shy. Include everything! Do you need help with speaking English? That's something a Swapper could help you with. Do you need a marketer to advertise your project? Do you need someone to respond to your emails in correct English? Perhaps you need a Swapper to take care of your kids while you run errands? Or to re-wire your electrics? We've met people using this system with such widely varied skills: accountants, architects, mud brick builders, plumbers, electricians, bankers, scientists, baby-sitters, gardeners, teachers, writers, marketers, glass blowers, artists, web designers...you name it, if you need a skill there's a good chance that there is a Swapper who is an expert in this area and wants to share their skill with you!

Step 2: Become a "Swap-Host".

Once you've found the areas in your project you need help with, the next step is to list your project on www.SwapWorkForTravel.com so that Swappers can find your project. Be sure to include as much information as you can about your project, and the type of food and accommodation you can offer.

Step 3: Search for a Swapper.

Swappers are real people, with a passion for travelling the world and experiencing life through the eyes of a local: ie you! Each Swapper can offer something slightly different, but the general agreement is usually that the Swapper will work on your project for around 5 hours per day, 5 days per week. In exchange you provide them with food and accommodation for the duration of their stay. Some Swappers will offer a range of skills for your project while others might have a more specialised area of expertise. Contact them and ask any extra questions you might have, and arrange the Swap!

Tips on how to find the best and most mutually rewarding Swaps:

1. **Be clear about how much time you want to spend with a Swapper.** If you value your privacy, say this. Likewise if you are happy to spend as much time as possible with your Swapper, say this too. You'll find if you're honest and upfront about how you want to spend your time, you're much more likely to find a Swapper who is looking for the same sort of arrangement as what you can offer.
2. **Look for Swappers who come from a country that interests you.** Just as your Swapper wants to learn about your culture, it can be really fun for you to learn about theirs too!
3. **Be clear about how long you'd like someone to stay.** Many Swap-Hosts fall into the easy option of looking for someone 'for as long as you like' or 'for as much time as you have'. This tends to lead to disappointment more often than if you state clearly 'My project will take 3 months, and I can accept Swappers for 1 month initially which can be extended if we are all happy with the arrangement'. That way you'll attract Swappers who are looking for a project for 1 month or more.
4. **Think about the types of activities you can offer your Swappers.** Are there walking tracks nearby? Forest? Beaches? Historic buildings? Can you take them to local markets or provide them with a map to get there? Will they be on their own to explore or will you be able to show them around? Again, just be clear about what you can offer.
5. **Do you have any friends or associates who can also host Swappers?** This can be a great way for groups of friends travelling together to stay among different hosts and explore the local area together.
6. **Is there a skill you've always wanted to learn?** Swap Work For Travel is an amazing way to learn and get experience in new skills. Here is your chance to learn something new and awesome!

Getting awesome Swappers and weeding out the duds

There are so many Swappers out there! How do you find the ones that will most easily integrate with your business and provide you the most benefit?

Here are some tips to help you get the best out of being a Swap-Host:

1. **Take a good, objective look at your business.** Think about its strengths and weaknesses. Make a plan of what needs to happen to take your business to the next level or get it running more smoothly. Create a primary list of business goals you would like Swappers to help you achieve.
2. **Look at reviews of potential Swappers.** Having a Swapper that is caring, accommodating and fun is the best person to start with when you first become a host. Check out reviews to see what other hosts have said about the person you are thinking of choosing.
3. **Choose Swappers with skillsets that you need the most.** It's all about what the Swapper can offer your business that you or your staff can't do really well (or don't have time to do) yourselves.
4. **Make sure the skills you require will be well met by what your potential Swapper can do.** If your primary business goal for Swappers is to create a new website, then this should be the MAIN skillset of your potential volunteer. Never assume what someone may be able to do or help with: check their list of skills and ask questions if you are not sure they will be able to handle the task you most need them to do.
5. **Choose a Swapper you like.** If you can get along well with your Swapper then they will be more productive, and both of you will get the most out of the experience.
6. **Ask plenty of questions.** Find out about this person who is going to come and share their life with you for a while.
7. **Make sure you let the Swapper know what is expected of them.** Clear expectations show Swappers exactly where they stand and help to ensure there is no disconnect or dissatisfaction from the project.

8. **Provide information about your business**, its goals, your staff, your location, accommodation and the food you will provide. The more information the better and the more your Swappers know what to expect before they arrive.

The 7 most common mistakes hosts make when taking on new Swappers. Make any of these mistakes and the upside to your business using Swap Work For Travel will be far less than it should be.

1. **Not providing enough information.** Swappers will typically travel a huge distance and spend a lot of money to come to your place of business to help you. They will usually have a whole lot of preconceived ideas about what it will be like and what is expected of them before they get there. The more information you can provide the less chance of disconnect and dissatisfaction there will be. We recommend you spend the time to write out as much information as you can about: accommodation provided, food provided, job description, your business, your staff, and Swapper projects.
2. **Choosing Swappers who don't have the right experience.** As we mentioned before it is a great idea to have a clear plan that identifies what areas of your business could most benefit from having the assistance of a Swapper. Choosing people who have the main skills you require as their top listed skills is the single best way to ensure maximum benefit for your business.
3. **Choosing Swappers without a can-do attitude.** Coming to a new country and fitting into a new position requires some skills in adaptation and a can-do attitude for Swappers. In 98% of cases this is never a problem, however a tiny percentage of people can have unrealistic expectations about the community and environment you live and work in. This is why it is important to provide as much grass roots information as you can, and paint a picture as accurately as you can, so your Swapper knows what to expect from you, the community and your business.
4. **Not knowing the exact goals you want your Swappers to achieve.** Swappers are powerful, free tools for your business, but they need direction and supervision from you to do the best job possible. You need to know exactly what problem you have that you want them to solve for you to get maximum benefit. For example, if your Swapper is

writing marketing material for you, you need to provide information about your business's point of difference – what makes your business unique? Knowing this means that your Swapper can write a clear and powerful message into your marketing.

5. **Not having sufficient work for the Swappers to do.** If you don't have enough work for your Swappers to do they will get bored and have a less fulfilling experience. Also they will create less benefit for your business. It is a good idea to think carefully about the tasks you want them to do and check in on them often to ensure they have enough to do so that they feel valuable.
6. **Not letting your Swappers know enough about cultural taboos and the rules of your business.** You can't assume that your Swappers will know much about your country and region. If there are any taboos that exist or any traditional or cultural elements of local life that are important you need to ensure you let your Swappers know about them. This is also true for your business. For example, if you own an eco-tourism company and you would like all emails to be answered within 24 hours make sure your Swappers are aware of this rule. Transparency makes for a much more enjoyable experience for Swappers and Swap-Hosts.
7. **Not providing enough guidance, feedback and supervision.** In order to ensure your Swappers have the best experience possible and make maximum impact in your business as well as achieve the tasks you set for them, you need to make sure you provide adequate guidance, feedback and supervision.

The 5 most abundant skills that Swappers have. Let them know you're looking for these skills and you'll have your pick of the best people to help you

Any skill you need is highly likely to be someone's area of expertise. There are some skills though, that are really easy to find and can help you a lot!

The 5 most abundant skills are:

1. **Marketing.** Many people will be able to help you spread your message. It's common for Swappers to be able to post offers on Facebook or offer you tips for what appeals to western customers, which could help your project or business dramatically.

2. **English language teaching.** Swappers are almost always fluent in English language and there are many ways to learn it. Many Swappers have a TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) certificate, and many can teach you or your staff conversational English. Or if you have children, you can get a native English speaker to come and teach them.
3. **Customer service/replying to emails.** There are so many Swappers who can come and help you serve your customers either in person or via email. Appearing professional to your prospective clients can be as simple as having correct written English, so this is a great way Swappers can help you.
4. **Training staff.** If you need someone who is experienced in almost any trade, such as building, plumbing, hospitality, accounting or using Microsoft Excel and Word, then you can search for a Swapper with these skills to train you and your staff in this skill.
5. **Website/social media assistance.** If you need a website or someone to post on different social media platforms for you, a Swapper can massively help your project or business. Swappers can also teach you how to post on social media so in future you have the choice of doing it yourself or getting another Swapper.

The do's and don'ts of living with a Swapper – our top 7 tips for ensuring everything goes smoothly

Becoming a Swap-Host and sharing your world with someone from a different country can be one of the most rewarding things you'll ever do. You get to develop a real connection with people in a way that having an employee can never achieve. Getting along well with your Swapper mainly comes down to basic mutual respect, but there are a few things you can do to make sure your experience goes smoothly.

1. **Be clear about the house rules.** Don't be afraid to tell your Swapper what you expect of them. If you want them to leave their shoes outside, help with washing the dishes, or do their share of the cooking, let them know. Swappers are usually very happy to do whatever you expect of them. They just need to understand what you want.

2. **Share your way of doing things with your Swapper.** Swappers are really keen to learn about your life and culture, and have often travelled half way around the world to stay with you. They are here to learn too!
3. **Be honest if you need some personal space or want to spend more time with your Swapper.** Usually your Swapper wants to please you, so if you need some time out, say so. Likewise, respect the fact that your Swapper might need time out sometimes too. Mutual respect goes a long way and as long as you keep the lines of communication open, most things can be worked out.
4. **Understand that different cultures express emotions in different ways.** Don't get upset if your Swapper inadvertently does something that might not align 100% with your way of doing things. If they have done something to offend you, teach them that this type of behaviour isn't allowed in your culture. Remember it's just different, and usually talking about things quietly and politely can resolve any issues you may have.
5. **Don't expect your Swapper to fully understand all aspects of your culture right away.** The first week will be an adjustment for both you, be patient and discuss any issues openly.
6. **Take the time to teach your Swapper some of the local language and introduce them to some local friends.** They will feel more comfortable in a place when they can understand some of what is being said and ask for the price of something or directions in the local language. Spending time with other locals outside of their Swap-Host family will also help them understand your culture more.
7. **Tell your Swapper about upcoming local ceremonies and events that they can take part in.** Attending a local event is a great way to feel included in local life and an easy way for you to involve your Swapper in your culture. And best of all, it's fun!

How to get the maximum benefit for your project

Here are four things we've found really maximize the results you get from using Swappers.

- 1. Get skilled workers to fill in the gaps of your business or project.** Not everyone knows everything. Having Swappers come into your business and donate time and expertise will allow your business to grow in ways you never thought possible. Having Swappers work for us meant new ideas and concepts for our business to make it grow and streamline it. These were things we couldn't come up with by ourselves!
- 2. Leverage the experience of your Swappers to expand and increase the profitability of your business or project.** If you want a job done well, then hire an expert. With Swap Work For Travel you have access to a veritable army of experts from all around the world who want to help you in ways you can't even imagine yet. There are marketing experts, design experts, advertising experts, customer service experts and many others that can help to give your business the winning edge and take it to the next level. Imagine leveraging the skills of people like this and how it could transform your enterprise and benefit the community you live in.
- 3. Move your business forward the cheapest way possible.** All those tasks that you keep putting off due to lack of time, lack of skilled staff or lack of funding can now be achieved, and for free! All you need to do is provide accommodation and food and your business can move forward in the cheapest and most fun way possible.
- 4. Think outside the box.** Swappers can help you do things you may never have thought of to benefit your business such as fundraising, applying for grants, tweaking your business message to generate the most appeal, setting up crowd-funding campaigns and social media advertising campaigns to attract more customers. Use the internet to see what small businesses are doing these days then use Swap Work For Travel to get Swappers to come and set up these things for you.

How to ensure a perfect balance between Swappers and your local staff

There's a small risk that your local staff may feel intimidated by your new highly-skilled Swappers who are helping you for free. There are several ways to prevent this:

1. Ensure your Swapper is helping your business for a very specific, specialised skill, or training your local staff in this skill.
2. Don't use Swappers to do jobs your local staff can do.
3. Use Swappers in areas your local staff aren't experienced in so that local staff are empowered by the Swappers' presence and learn from them.
4. In remote areas, where the presence of another culture is not common, you should provide additional training to your Swappers about how to interact in your culture.
5. Talk to your local staff and make it clear why a Swapper is coming to your business and how the business and staff will benefit from their expertise.
6. Make the boundaries of authority clear: who is in charge of what and who reports to whom.
7. Encourage your local staff to talk to you if there are any problems with Swappers and discuss everything openly.

If you follow these simple guidelines you can be sure that having a Swapper work on your project is a great way to share skills and empower your local staff to be able to learn and grow in your business.

We can thoroughly recommend engaging Swappers to enhance your personal and business projects. For us it has given us so much freedom and enjoyment, and we have formed so many amazing friendships along the way. The benefit to our local staff has also been immense; they have been able to learn many things we could not have taught them if we were trying to do everything by ourselves.

Swap-Hosts are an emerging new breed of people who recognise the benefits in sharing what they have to receive what they need, and here's your chance to become part of it!

Travel stories from Swappers

Here are stories from people who have successfully Swapped Work For Travel.

Marcella Segre:

“My first trip as a volunteer was in 2004 in Nepal. Since then, I have always tried to combine my travels with some volunteering in different communities around Asia. Volunteering while travelling gives you an insight into the community you are visiting and is a fantastic and meaningful way to learn about yourself too, about your culture and skills as well as your interpersonal and communication skills. It is not easy for a community to receive and manage Swappers, and it is important to know this when you travel and wish to give your help to a project. Try to focus on some specific skills or needs and, most of all, have fun and smile, because this is the best cultural exchange and travel experience you can offer to others and to yourself! Volunteering is indeed a mutual learning experience!”

George Wilcox:

“I love the idea of volunteering as I travel around the world, and I don't think that now I would want to travel any other way. Not only do you get food and accommodation, which is so so nice on an incredibly tight budget, but you also meet people and experience things that aren't a part of the normal hostel world type of travelling. In hostels and hotels you meet people like you. You can chat, drink, enjoy the places you go to, but I always felt like I never really got to know a place. I just knew it as a tourist with all my friends who were also tourists.

Volunteering allows you to open a world that isn't seen as much by the normal backpacker. You can experience real cultures, go to places that the locals go, meet the people who live in those countries and really understand their own culture. And perhaps most importantly, the projects you do are often there to help. The people that run them always have a dream of making the world a bit of a better place, and you can be a part of that.

I haven't regretted any of my volunteering, but one warning to people who want to do it. It is not just a holiday. This is a person's life you are becoming a part of and you shouldn't expect to sit around all day in a sun bed reading Kerouac. You have to work. But if you really do accept this advice then I assure you that you will love every single second of it."

Debra Doyle:

"Traveling slowly is the ideal way to go. You get to know more about a culture and how things really work instead of blazing in and out of a tourist center, seeing the main sites and leaving with only a glimpse of what it's like to live there. Obviously, time and money are a concern but if you've got the time volunteering is the perfect way to make up for the lack of money. As a volunteer you get to live in a foreign country, usually exactly as the locals do, and you usually get free food and accommodation in exchange for your work.

In my experience, it's the best way to get to know a local culture for virtually free. If your hosts are seeking Swappers that means they're also seeking genuine cultural exchange. I lived in Cambodia for 6 months as a volunteer and ended up getting invited to parties, festivals, ceremonies and even went on seemingly mundane errands that turned into bigger adventures than I ever anticipated. I would have never gotten to attend a Khmer wedding or celebrate Khmer New Year the way that I did if I were just traveling through.

Imagine what you would show someone who is only visiting your city for 2 days. Now imagine what your guests would get to experience if they were with you for a few months. The perspective you gain gives you a deeper understanding of the place you're visiting and a more intense travel experience overall."

So as you can see, it's easy and rewarding to become a Swap-Host with Swap Work For Travel. You too can form real connections with people from all over the world, and have them help you for free.

What are you waiting for? Join us and find your perfect Swapper today. It's free to join, so you have nothing to lose!

For more information contact us at support@SwapWorkForTravel.com and we'll be happy to help you.

Good luck

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