Encouraging non-depository staff to contribute to the success of depository projects

In 2018, the Old Dominion University Libraries University Librarian decided that our selective depository, at an R2 mid-sized academic library, needed to significantly reduce our depository physical footprint within six months. A project of this magnitude, meant performing many tasks concurrently, such as reviewing, offering, and reducing tens of thousands of items in various formats (documents, maps, atlases, and micromaterials). The first challenge, the depository coordinator and depository staff member's depository duties are only a small percentage of their overall responsibilities. A second challenge, the coordinator has no direct reports, and such a large and complex project would require the cooperation of numerous people, units, departments, and institutes. The greatest challenge, how to convince and motivate those participating to work in a way to achieve such an ambitious goal.

Consider the following, the six-month project reduced the collection footprint from 6804 linear feet to 1700 linear feet. This only happened after touching and reviewing each item. Adding difficulty, the team then relocated kept items from the 1st floor to the 2nd floor to serve as the new FDLP location.

"People are persuaded by reason but moved by emotion." (2002)

Approach
1. ***Have a plan*** (know the objective, timeline, possible workflows, and needed partners)
2. ***Take the lead*** (lead by example, communicate goals, inspire those helping)
3. ***Look to succeed*** (share any/all recognition with those involved on the project)

Application
1. ***Communicating the essentials with your team and others, but at a minimum communicate the below basics with each participant.***
   a. What? (what is the project)
   b. Why? (why is the project important)
   c. Who? (who are the people working on the project)
   d. When? (when does the project need to be done)
   e. How? (how will the project be done)
2. ***Setting the tone, as a leader, will help unlock people's true potential.***
   a. Establish a positive environment
   b. Encourage contributions
   c. Highlight everyone's value
   d. Provide timely input
   e. Set milestones and celebrate achievements
3. ***Inviting input and ideas will foster ownership.***
   a. Empower those helping
   b. Utilize people's strengths
   c. Realize there are many ways to do things
   d. Seek the ideas of others

Appreciation
1. ***Remember the impact of recognizing the work of all involved.***
   a. Congratulate participation
   b. Remind each person of the importance of their contributions
   c. Constantly give and show gratitude
2. ***Spread the news by making participant's supervisors aware.***
   a. Email notes to document success and achievements
   b. Discuss the success of the project as a team effort
   c. Always share any recognition given

What's more effective pushing or pulling?

No matter what you do in life, you'll often need the help of others to succeed. This is especially true if you're a depository coordinator. There's always lots to do and not so many people there to help. Yet, if we try to pull rather than push staff into helping, then we might just find more willing assistance along the way. It also helps when your administration makes a project and its completion a priority, as was the case in this footprint reduction project. Instead of pushing that card, you might be better to pull on people's emotions.

Reference
Gouldthorpe, H., Gravitt, B., & Freiberg, K. (2002). *I've always looked up to giraffes: Discover why and how some people and organizations stand head and shoulders above the crowd … foreward by Kevin Freiberg*. Houston, Tex: Mobility, Inc.