Volunteer Retention

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Recruitment or Retention?

• Engagement
• Involvement
• Retention
Retention

• It costs staff time to recruit, market, screen, place, and train volunteers.
• The costs are up front.
• If volunteers leave within the first few months, the organization is starting over.
• If they stay longer, costs decrease.
First year members

• Statistically the biggest loss
• Focus on how to keep them
• From Annual to Perennial
The motivation to join an organization can be very different from the motivation to stay.
Volunteers often leave when the job becomes redundant, boring, or their 'term' of commitment is over.
Top 10 Strategies for Keeping Volunteers

• Understand and meet people's needs
• Be a matchmaker
• Set people up for success
• See volunteers as customers
• Designate a volunteer resource professional
• Maintain a positive organizational climate
• Welcome diversity
• Be flexible
• Don't burn people out
• Recognize contributions
• Volunteers redirected or reassigned may be happier and ultimately stay longer.
Those who are very passionate about the cause of the organization have a harder time leaving.
When retention improves, we increase the skill level of the organization and also reduce (not eliminate) the need for recruitment.
What is our focus?

• On what volunteers DO.
• On what volunteers NEED.

• Recruitment and retention hinges on the relationship developed between the volunteer and the organization
Volunteers want something that is:

- meaningful,
- rewarding,
- productive,
- respectful
• When volunteers are satisfied,
• production levels and accomplishments increase
• By focusing on what keeps volunteers, we should increase retention rates and 'potential' volunteers should be attracted to us.

• What goes around comes around!
Questions?