Membership Retention
By Patrick J. Donadio, MBA, CSP, MCC

Turn Desires into Self-Motivation*:

1. **Activity** - Make volunteering more active, build fun into work, add variety
2. **Ownership** (psychological ownership) - Ask for their input/opinions, delegate authority
3. **Power** - Let them make choices, give them responsibility for their work, provide leadership opportunities, give them interesting work or some of your interesting work
4. **Affiliation** - Offer opportunities to socialize, use the power of the team
5. **Competence** - Use volunteer’s hidden strengths, provide learning opportunities (training), tolerate mistakes
6. **Achievement** - Provide objective performance measures, let volunteers set goals for themselves, challenge them to stretch their limits, encourage them to improve
7. **Meaning** - Show and remind volunteers of the significance of their work
8. **Recognition** - Show appreciation, encourage them, recognize them publicly

*Adapted from “Super Motivators” by Dean Spitzer, AMACOM books

10 Keys to Effective Recognition:

1. **Do it often** - Look for it! Don’t wait for the annual awards banquet.
2. **Be Specific** – Don’t say “Nice job!” say, “Thanks, I appreciate you calling to recruit more volunteers!”
3. **Do it promptly** – Don’t wait too long after the activity to recognize people for their efforts
4. **Tie it to performance** - Use for above-average performance. Match the degree of recognition with the level of recipient’s achievement-- the greater the performance--the greater incentive
5. **Be Creative! Make it fun and memorable** - A variety of rewards help maintain your peoples interest in earning them. Otherwise your people may come to expect the reward as an ongoing effort.
6. **Make it easy for people to do**. Develop tools. Example: M.I.C. Award (Membership Involvement Counts)
7. **Involve all volunteers** - Team members can recognize their volunteers or nominate them for recognition.
8. **Build it into a system** - Should be in job description
9. **Be Consistent** – Do it in a consistent way. Otherwise it could backfire
10. **Tailor it to the person/team** - Different strokes for different folks! Find out their interest and match the reward to meet their needs/wants. Choose reward/recognition that will match their interests.
Membership Retention Ideas:

**Seasoned Members:**

Past Presidents are a wealth of knowledge. Once they leave the board, try to keep them involved as much as possible. Here are a few ways...

- **Annual Past Presidents’ Breakfast/Luncheon/Dinner** - At one of your meetings (or at your annual meeting) invite all Past Presidents to have Breakfast with the current local board and/or national President (if they are coming to your chapter). Also you can use this meeting to share ideas, recruit the former volunteer, do strategic planning, etc.

- **Past Presidents’ Council (PPC)** – Create a PPC to tap the resources of your Past Presidents: discuss how we can get seasoned speakers to come to meetings or get involved, ask for their insights and wisdom, have them write articles for newsletter, use them on a Presidents Panel, etc.

- **Presidential Board Appointment** - Use Past Presidents as resource. My first appointee was NSA board member and past chapter president Pat Vivo, CSP, CPAE. She was great!

- **Annual Chapter Awards** - Name awards after longtime members or past officers. If still living, engage the longtime member by asking them for input on the award criteria or have them present their award.

- **Recognition** - Recognized Past Presidents at each meeting (along with any other VIPs). Have them represent the chapter on “Meetings industry Council”, in the community, and at NSA events.

**CSP/CPAE Members** are busy speakers and will usually help when asked, so ask them…

- **Involve Them** – Invite CSP/CPAE members to participate on the chapter program. They can be a presenter, an introducer, a mentor, do “meet the pros”… The key is to ask how they would like to contribute

- **Annual CSP/CPAE Breakfast/Luncheon/Dinner** – Invite CSP/CPAE members to meet and discuss concerns and how chapter can better meet their needs. That same day they meet you can also do a special advanced program just for CSP/CPAEs and/or have a CSP/CPAE Panel on the program to share their expertise.

- **Recognition** - Recognized CSP/CPAEs at each meeting (along with any other VIPs)

**Established Members** are potential future leaders!

- **Involve Them** – Invite Established Members to participate on the chapter program and/or on committees. They can be a presenter, an introducer, a mentor, do “meet the pros”, use them as greeters, to present the safety message, do the invocation, be the MC, help with registration, be the AV coordinator, etc. The key is to ask them!

**Newer Members**

Newer Members Get them engaged/involved as soon as possible

- **Create a Buddy System** – pair up newer members with established and seasoned members

- **Involved Them** - Give unknown & unseen member and opportunity to be involved. Spread the “FACE Time” among as many members as possible, use them as greeters, to present the safety message, do the invocation, be an introducer, be the MC, help with registration, be the AV coordinator, etc. Get them involved on committees as soon as possible
1. Smile  
2. Be pleasant  
3. Greet by name  
4. Send a note  
5. Treat to a beverage  
6. Say “Good Morning”  
7. Take time to explain  
8. Hold a rap-session  
9. Give additional responsibility  
10. Never bad-mouth  
11. Give emotional support or a hug  
12. Ask, “How are you?” – and—  
13. …Wait for an answer  
14. Call them  
15. Have a picnic  
16. Send a valentine  
17. Remember them in your prayers  
18. Send them a poem that reminds you of them  
19. Treat to an ice cream cone  
20. Accept them  
21. Be honest, even if it hurts  
22. Write a thank you note  
23. Say “I misses you”  
24. Send flowers (!) or one flower anyway  
25. Spend time with them  
26. Help them with a project  
27. Ask them out to lunch  
28. Say “You’re special”  
29. Don’t take for granted  
30. Give a warm fuzzy  
31. Drop them a line  
32. Listen  
33. Pat on the back  
34. Admit you don’t know an answer  
35. Respect them  
36. Wink  
37. Accept their compliment  
38. Recognize and accommodate personal needs  
39. Help develop self confidence  
40. Challenge  
41. Accept criticism  
42. Be supportive  
43. Say “Good Afternoon”  
44. Accept suggestions  
45. Honor preferences  
46. Be real  
47. Spend time  
48. Order a pizza  
49. Say “Hell-o”  
50. Invite them for popcorn  
51. Share responsibility  
52. Compliment  
53. Express emotions  
54. Be considerate  
55. Share concerns  
56. Share necessary information  
57. Offer a shoulder  
58. Plan time together  
59. Show trust  
60. Give a little gift (of thoughtfulness)  
61. Share ideas  
62. Be approachable  
63. Enforce rules  
64. Give alternatives  
65. Be fair  
66. Don’t give advice  
67. Ask questions  
68. Be consistent  
69. Provide feedback  
70. Laugh with them  
71. Think things through  
72. Be flexible  
73. Share a joke  
74. Introduce them to others  
75. Get them involved  
76. Be a friend  
77. Believe them  
78. Believe in them  
79. Be (don’t act) genuinely concerned  
80. Let them be one of your family  
81. Encourage them, especially when they are down  
82. Stick up for them  
83. Publicly recognize them