Everyone Ready®

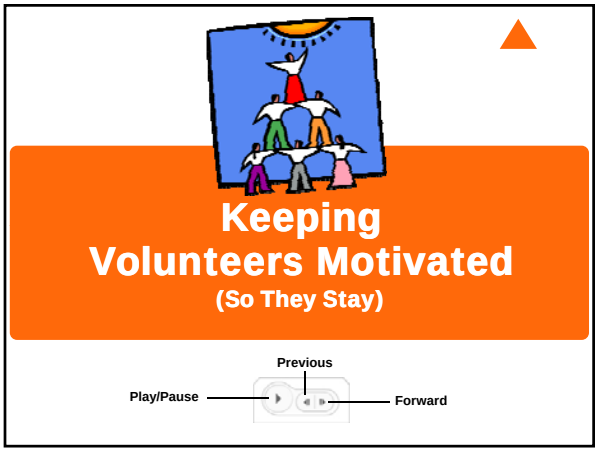
Achieve more when *everyone's* ready for volunteers

FROM ENERG!ZE

Slide Views for Notes

Keeping Volunteers Motivated (So They Stay)

Trainer: Betty Stallings



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Why this Topic?

- Recruitment efforts get new volunteers in the door
- Maintaining motivation gets them to stay
- After the initial excitement fades, help volunteers stay connected
  - Avoid a "revolving door"

What We'll Cover

Part 1:

- Are your retention expectations realistic?
- Do you know what motivates your volunteers?
- How does motivation fit with your other volunteer management strategies?

Part 2:

- Keeping long-term volunteers motivated
  - Dealing with burnout
  - Helping long-time volunteers to move on

Part 3:

- Motivating new, short-term, and mandated volunteers

How Do You Define *Retention?*

For our organization, *successful retention* means that volunteers:

- ☐ Stay with us for life
- ☐ Stay as long as possible
- ☐ Stay at least 3 years
- ☐ Stay at least 1 year
- ☐ Stay for as long as we need them
- ☐ Stay for as long as they promised when they signed on

Select the best answer. Then click the forward arrow.

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Setting the Right Expectations

Rethink how you define "retention success"

- "Longevity" may be the wrong metric
- Consider:
  - Useful service
  - Impact

Retention Success Is Relative

There is no "standard" for retention success

- Each organization needs to determine:
  - How long does it take to accomplish a meaningful goal?

The answer varies for each assignment:

- Organizational factors such as:
  - How much training must we invest in the volunteer?
- Service and mission factors such as
  - Will our clients find it hard to cope with high volunteer turnover?

A Better Metric

Define retention success by:

- Comparing how long the volunteer stays to…
- The volunteer's commitment at the start of service

Be explicit about mutual expectations:

- Explain what duration of service you require
- Ask "How long do you anticipate being here with us?"

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Key Questions

To measure retention success, consider these key questions:

- Did the volunteer honor his/her commitment?
- Did we successfully engage the volunteer to stay with us, after the original commitment expired?

What Else Needs to Change?

Changing how we think about and measure retention…

Leads us to change our management practices

- Initial interview:
  - What are your plans and intentions?
- Documentation practices:
  - Capturing volunteer responses
  - Recording them so they can be accessed later

Preparing for the Unexpected

We can't control the unexpected

But we can keep the welcome mat out

- So that people feel invited to return
- *What's the best way for us to keep in touch?*

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Is Retention Always Good?

In some cases, long-term retention can cause its own problems

- Veteran volunteers become entrenched
- New volunteers feel unwelcome

Bottom line:
Longevity alone does not mean success!

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Retaining Productive Volunteers

Benefits:

- More cost effective to retain than recruit
- More likely to make a financial donation
- Higher comfort level for staff
- Better service levels for clients

So, how do you keep volunteers motivated… so they stay?

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How Do You Motivate Others?

You can't.

- But you can provide the atmosphere and resources to encourage motivation to flourish
- Understand and support:
  - Initial motivators
  - Motivators that evolve over time

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Understanding Motivators

Why do people volunteer?

- To help an important cause
- To meet new friends
- To learn new skills
- And a myriad other reasons!

Uncovering Initial Motivators

Know why people say "yes" to volunteering with you….

Then place them into related positions

Must balance

- Your organization's needs, with
- What volunteers want

Things Change!

According to psychologist Abraham Maslow:

- Once a need has been met, it is no longer a motivator

What can you do?

- Anticipate that motivators change
- Paying attention can help prevent drift

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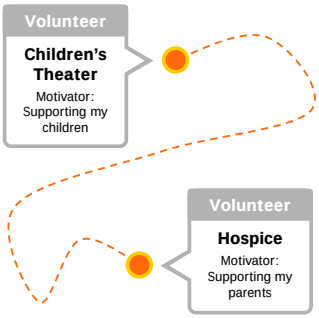
Critical Question

At the point when a volunteer's motives are changing, what if you asked:

Is there anything we can do to keep you involved with us?

A Personal Journey



Does Your Organization Ask?

Does your organization ask this key question?

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Never

Remember, volunteer commitment evolves over time

- Sustaining commitment requires a systematic approach

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Volunteer Management System

1: Work Design

Engage volunteers through diverse, meaningful opportunities

Are your volunteer positions designed to sustain motivation?

Click here to learn more

Volunteer Management System

2: Recruitment

Make *motivation* the heart of your recruitment campaign

- Is your recruitment message persuasive?
- Is your recruitment message accurate?

Would your volunteers agree with your answers?

Recruiting Right

Your recruitment messages should be both persuasive and accurate

- Recruiting appropriate volunteers increases the likelihood of keeping them
- An unrealistic portrayal of the organization will result in a lack of trust…and lost volunteers

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Volunteer Management System

3: Interviewing & Placement

Invest the time to determine:

- What attracted you to us, or to this position?
- What skills/knowledge/ experience do you want to acquire in this position?
- What other commitments do you have?
- How does volunteering fit?

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Impact of Placement

Appropriate placement leads to:

- Volunteers who are more successful
- Staff who are more satisfied with volunteers

Inappropriate placement:

- Can impair relations between staff and volunteers
- Can lead to conflicts which ultimately decrease volunteer motivation and retention

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Volunteer Management System

4: Orientation & Training

Prepares volunteers to succeed

- Better service to client
- Greater satisfaction for volunteer

Opportunities to interact and connect

- Builds sense of community and belonging

Opportunities for personal growth and skills development

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Volunteer Management System
5: Supervision

Supervisors:

- Build and maintain relationships with volunteers
- Determine appropriate placement
- Serve as front line for assessing volunteer satisfaction:
  - Changing needs or interests
  - Readiness for more responsibility
- May be able to spot – and circumvent – impending burnout

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Volunteer Management System
6: Recognition

Volunteer recognition is a great motivator!

Best recognition is personal:

- Discover who they are and what motivates them

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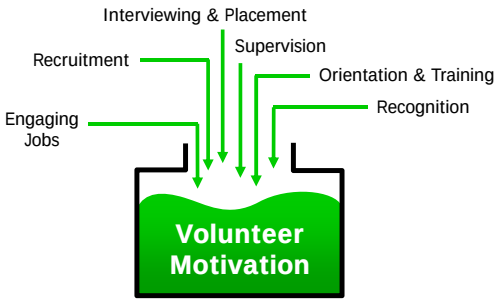
How Is Your Organization Doing?



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Think About It....

Worksheet in your Trainer's Handouts

Consider obtaining multiple points of view:

- New volunteers
- Short-term volunteers
- Long-term volunteers

What We'll Cover

Part 1:

- ☒ Are your retention expectations realistic?
- ☒ Do you know what motivates your volunteers?
- ☒ How does motivation fit with your other volunteer management strategies?

Part 2:

- ☐ Keeping long-term volunteers motivated
  - ☐ Dealing with burnout
  - ☐ Helping long-time volunteers to move on

Part 3:

- ☐ Motivating new, short-term, and mandated volunteers

End of Part 1

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Turn on speakers

Keeping Volunteers Motivated
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Online Seminar - Part 2 of 3

With Betty Stallings

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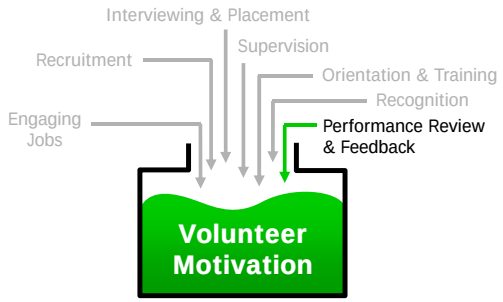
Volunteer Management System



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Performance Review Agenda

Annual Performance Review -- Volunteers

- List past year's achievements
- Identify any problems with volunteer's performance
- Explain this year's goals
- Thank volunteer

Performance Review Agenda

Annual Performance Review -- Volunteers

- Share ~~List~~ past year's achievements
  - Ask: What accomplishment are you most proud of?
- Talk about ~~Identify~~ any problems with volunteer's performance **or with the situation**
  - Ask: What can we do to help?
  - Ask: Are there problems in your service area that we should know about?
- Discuss ~~Explain~~ this year's goals
  - Ask: What are you hoping to accomplish with us this year?
- Thank volunteer **and welcome any other comments**

Missing: Mutuality

Why Do a Mutual Review?

If volunteer has been effective:

- You recognize past achievement
- Perfect opportunity to discuss upcoming goals

What is the point of a mutual review?

If volunteer has been ineffective:

- Discussion allows for problem-solving
- Opportunity to explore what organization can do

Either way, you are motivating volunteer to recommit

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More Benefits of Review Sessions

- Volunteers can tell supervisors what they need
- Supervisors can say thanks and discuss future involvement
- Supervisors can assess for burnout, and intervene if necessary
- Supervisor can determine if motivators have changed

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Personal Side of Mutual Reviews

More personal than annual recognition events

- Genuine thanks
- Tied to specific achievement

Can be adapted to what matters to each individual volunteer

Gives volunteers a chance to influence the program

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Making a Difference....

Volunteers want to see results

- It's a key source of continuing motivation

But what if results aren't readily visible?

Use review sessions to recognize and celebrate interim results

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Empowering Growth

Help long-term volunteers to reach their desired potential

- Incremental positions
- Increased complexity or responsibility

When volunteers plateau, you risk losing them

One caveat: If volunteers are satisfied, don't force them to advance!

Upward Mobility for Volunteers

In your organization:

- Is there a way for volunteers to move horizontally or laterally?
- Is upward mobility an option?
- Will current leadership make room for volunteers at the top?

Flexibility Motivates Volunteers

Sustaining motivation requires flexibility and mobility:

- Internal skills bank
- Back-up system so volunteers can arrange for coverage if they can't come in
- Sabbaticals and leaves of absence
- Re-invite lapsed volunteers
- Assignment rotation

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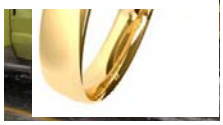
Life Changes Impact Motivation

Volunteer motivation is impacted by life changes

To mitigate negative impact on volunteering, consider your options:

- Redesign assignments
- Give volunteers more flexibility
- Encourage a leave of absence
  - And a return when it is easier for them to serve

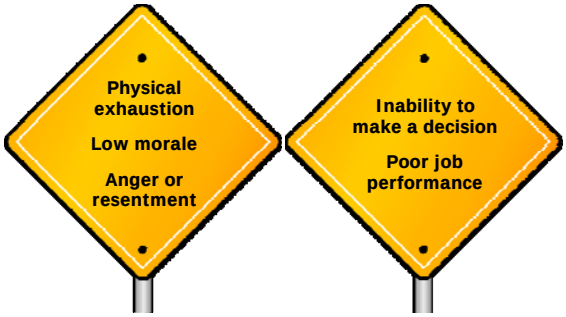


What Causes Burnout

Volunteers burn out when:

- The work no longer excites them
- They can't achieve their goals
- The burden they face feels overwhelming
- They feel unsupported
- Tasks seem repetitive

Signs of Burnout



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Extinguishing Burnout

If you spot burnout, consider:

- Does the volunteer need a leave of absence?
- Would more support or training help?
- Should the volunteer be assigned a partner?
- Could some of the job be assigned to another volunteer?

Don't Ignore Signs of Burnout

Unacknowledged burnout can result in burned-up volunteers

- Behaving destructively toward themselves or the organization

Often, your most dedicated, motivated volunteers are at risk

- Why? They are the least willing to admit to having a problem

Difficult Situation

Syndrome:

- Some of your volunteers are beginning to feel like an extra client group

You must address the situation:

- NOT dealing with the problem makes it worse
- Maintaining performance standards sends a message to ALL volunteers

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When Long-Term Volunteers Become Dysfunctional

Determine if the situation is salvageable

- Can you make changes that correct the underlying problem?
- Are there other roles that might be a better fit?

If the risk is just too high

- Find a way for the volunteer to retire with dignity
  - Emeritus group, honor roll, or life-member status
  - Keep in touch and invite them to activities
  - Often, loyal volunteers become financial donors

Interaction Between Long-Term and New Volunteers

Your organization's high *average length of service* may be a mixed blessing

- Future success depends on including volunteers from many generations
- Some entrenched volunteers may seem unwelcoming or stifle innovation

Don't wait for this problem to fix itself:

- Put the issue on the table
- Create a task force

Lapsed Volunteers

Old reality:

- Volunteers opt either to stay or leave

New reality:

- Volunteer commitment level may vary over time

Create an atmosphere that encourages lapsed volunteers to rejoin when they are able

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Keeping Connected

Use exit interviews to indicate that lapsed volunteers are welcome to return

- When might you be ready to serve again?
- How can we stay in touch with you while you are away from us?

What If There's a Problem?

Volunteers who are exiting may disclose problems with:

- Supervisors
- Other volunteers
- The work itself

These are management problems

- Address them – before other volunteers leave!

More Ideas for Lapsed Volunteers

- Keep them on the mailing list, but don't overwhelm them
- Invite former volunteers for special occasions
- If a short-term need arises that matches their interests, ask them if they could help out
- Hold a reunion for former volunteers
  - Catch them up on news
  - Let them know about new ways to get involved
- Make sure they know that you look forward to their return!

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What We'll Cover

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- Are your retention expectations realistic?
- Do you know what motivates your volunteers?
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Part 2:

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  - Dealing with burnout
  - Helping long-time volunteers to move on

Part 3:

- Motivating new, short-term, and mandated volunteers

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End of Part 2

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Vocabulary Check!

Newcomers
- Affiliated
- May or may not stay

One-time/episodic/ spontaneous
- Short-term projects
- May volunteer as a group

Mandated Community Service
- Required to volunteer
- Some stay on

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Motivating Newcomers

Before newcomers fully commit, they travel through critical life-cycle phases:

- Application process
- End of month 1
- End of month 6
- End of year 1
  (or initial commitment period)

Ask yourself: Are we supporting them through each phase?

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Newcomers: Application Process

What happens during *your* application process?

- Are prospective volunteers welcomed when they first contact you?
- Do they get important and timely information about how to volunteer?
- Can they get a first-hand experience before they commit?
- What is the time-lapse between expressing interest and getting registered?

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Do You Know the Answer?

How many potential volunteers are lost during *your* application process?

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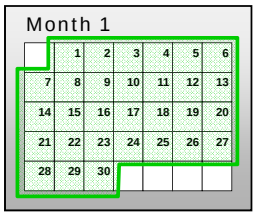
Newcomers: Month 1

In the first month, reality sets in

- If the new position is a poor fit, volunteer may leave

What can you do?

- Supervisor should monitor and intervene, if necessary



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Newcomers: Month 6

After Month 6, initial adjustment is complete

- Volunteers determine whether the assignment and the culture are a good fit

What can you do?

- Use mentors, buddy system or other means so they meet people
- Conduct a 6-month review with the volunteer
- Provide symbols of belonging

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Year 1 (or End of Initial Commitment)

After Year 1 (or initial commitment period):

- Personal accomplishment and acceptance

What can you do?

- Click here for ideas!

First Anniversary Actions

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One-Time, Episodic or Spontaneous Volunteers

These volunteers emerge for:

- Single days of service
- One-time projects or one-time events
- Disasters

The challenge:

- How to connect them with the organization's ongoing needs

Dealing with One-Time, Episodic or Spontaneous Volunteers

Don't assume they will give only one day

- **DO:** Make sure they feel invited to give more time
- **DON'T:** Make them feel guilty for saying no

Optimize the event to promote ongoing service:

- Pre-event planning
- Initial response to offers of help
- Volunteer experience during the event
- Follow-up after the event

Pre-Event Planning

Your one-time event or activity should have two goals:

1. To accomplish the purpose of the event itself
2. To assemble a pool of prospective volunteers who might contribute to future:
   - One-time needs
   - Ongoing needs

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A Tough Question

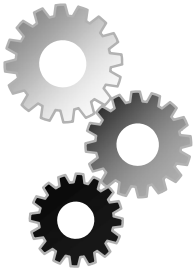
Answer honestly!

Suppose that you could transform 25% of your one-time or spontaneous volunteers into ongoing volunteers.

- *Would you have meaningful job opportunities for them?*
- If not, start with job design

Initial Offer

Who does the recruiting?



If you do:

- You have an opportunity to communicate directly
- Include the message about your ongoing needs, right from the start

If another group does:

- You'll need to communicate your message indirectly

Indirect Recruiters

Take time to prepare indirect recruiters

- Ask them to tell their group members to consider volunteering individually for a longer period
- Develop a one-page handout for distribution by the group leader

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What Would You Do?

Situation:

- A black-out left thousands of people without power during a winter cold snap.
- Local humanitarian agencies sent out a call to help. So many volunteers responded that the agencies had to turn some away.

Question:
How can an agency motivate such "lost" volunteers to try again?

Dealing with Too Many Volunteers

When you cannot place some volunteers into the roles they seek:

- Communicate quickly and honestly!
- Explain why
- Do it in a way that shows:
  - You appreciate their response
  - You are hoping they will volunteer again
- Capture their contact information
- Use the opportunity to demonstrate the need for longer-term attention to the underlying mission

At the Event / Activity

Organization counts!

- Use volunteer time efficiently so they feel they have accomplished something significant
- If appropriate, assign "greeters" or "scouts" to:
  - Thank volunteers for participating
  - Interact with volunteers
  - Determine if volunteers are interested in longer-term connection

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Power of Social Connection

Social connection is a great motivator!

- Encourage interaction
- Build in time to hear about other volunteer opportunities
  - Works best if this message comes from a current volunteer!
- Hand out something tangible
  - Reminds volunteers of their experience
  - Builds sense of belonging

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Before Volunteers Depart

Conduct exit interview at end of the event:

- Did we adequately prepare you for your experience at the event today?
- Did we support your volunteer position at the event? What suggestions would you have to enhance future events?
- Are you interested in being involved in future events?
- Are you interested in learning about other volunteer opportunities with us?

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Power of Exit Interviews

Exit interviews get one-time volunteers to think like a longer-term volunteer:

- Feel appreciated
- Feel involved in improving the event in the future
- Give feedback that will impact future events
- Give permission to discuss ways they can help out in the future

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After the Event

Report accomplishments – creatively!

- Even one-time volunteers want to know the impact of their work
- What was the result of their collective action?
- What remains to be done?
- And don't forget the importance of a simple "Thank you"

One-Time Events

Keep in mind:

- One-time volunteers may be "testing the waters" before becoming involved long-term

Make sure each project:

- Is hands-on and fun
- Provides immediate gratification

And don't forget that follow-up is key!

Mandated Community Service

Time contributed due to:

- External placement
- Often, service is required

But that doesn't mean that long-term service is out of the question!

- Approach this group with high expectations
- Some may be willing to commit long-term

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Creating Work for Mandated Community Service Volunteers

Good work design is crucial

- Avoid "silos" for mandated volunteers
- Interview each person to determine placement
- Make each job fulfilling and useful
- Treat them with respect – and they will rise to the occasion

Dealing with Mandated Community Service Volunteers

Principles that apply to other volunteers will work for this group, too

One special point:

- When their externally-defined time commitment ends, invite them to continue on
- Often, they think they are not welcome to stay
- Inviting them to stay is:
  - A form of recognition
  - A way to re-open the discussion about personal goals and assignment opportunities

Additional Resources

Additional material is available in:

- Trainer's Handouts
- Discussion Guide

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Four Elements of Motivation

People are motivated when they:

- Clarity
  - Understand the organization's mission, and their role
- Competency
  - Receive the tools and resources to do the work well
- Influence
  - Are allowed input into job design and ways to serve the organization in the future
- Recognition
  - Receive acknowledgement and appreciation for the significance of their contribution

Source: ***Coaching for Commitment*** by Dennis C. Kinlaw

What We Covered

Part 1:

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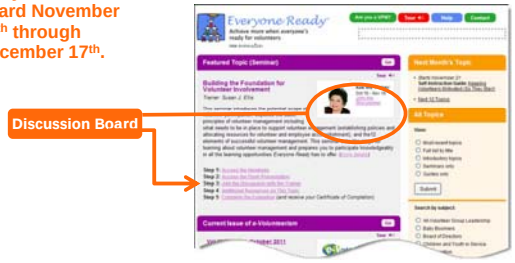
Join Me on the Discussion Board!

Betty will be on the board November 21th through December 17th.



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