

## **Retaining Members**

Member retention is an ongoing, daily process. You are not going to please everyone, and occasionally a group member may decide that the organization is not a good match for them or they want to experience a different type of involvement. Each person has different reasons for wanting to stay, so change up your tactics. Here are a few ideas to keep your members interested and excited.

### Orientation

The faster they get to know the organization and the people in it, the faster they will become effective, contributing members. Have a special meeting just to introduce new members to the organization. Help them get to know each other with teambuilders and icebreakers, and let them know what's expected of them as members.

### Fit Jobs to People, Not People to Jobs

Individuals have different talents. Let them do a job they are going to like and succeed at. Get them involved right away; give them responsibility. It will help them become better leaders and more invested in the organization.

### Rewards

Positive reinforcement is very important to keep a group motivated to stay in the organization. Reinforce individuals as well as groups, committees, and the entire membership. Have social gatherings as a reward for accomplishing your goals. Create a fun, positive environment in your organization.

### Group Relations

Get to know new members personally. A big reason people join organizations is to make connections and meet new people. No one wants to belong to an organization where they are valued only for their volunteer hours.

### Feedback

When a member does leave the group, ask to conduct an "exit interview" with them. In a friendly, casual way, discuss why the individual is moving on. Departing members may provide excellent information to improve your organization.

### Swag

Organization paraphernalia creates belonging – photos, names on websites and bulletin boards, t-shirts, pens, koozies, anything with a logo that's for members only will create a connection with the organization.

### Have Fun!

Not every meeting and event should be all about business. Take time to have events and outings just for fun! This is a great way to build relationships and keep your members interested.

*Adapted from Northern Michigan University*