The 4 R’s of Volunteering

Alumni Communities
Training Module 2009
Intro

This information seeks to help Stanford club volunteers reach, serve and engage their alumni in the most effective manner. This module is mainly intended for clubs with boards.

Based on a presentation by Laura Johnston, ’93, past president of the Rocky Mountain Stanford Association and the Stanford Club of Washington
What We Will Cover

- Recruiting
  - Getting new energy and ideas
- Retaining
  - Mentoring, growing and repotting
- Rewarding
  - Acknowledging, thanking and making opportunities
- Retiring
  - Leaving at the top of your game, keeping it positive and making room for new volunteers
Q: Our club has trouble recruiting new volunteers. What can we do?
Recruiting: What Works

- Constant, year-round efforts — never stop
- Ask/advertise at the right events
- Target talent deliberately
- Target diverse talent
- Target specific needs
- Follow up on referrals
- Check references of volunteers when possible
- Be clear about expectations/responsibilities and time frame of the role upfront
- Take advantage of online social networking sites (e.g., Facebook)
Recruiting: What Doesn’t Work

- Waiting for volunteers to step forward
- Relying on the same volunteers
- Recruiting haphazardly
- Not stating upfront your expectations of a member volunteering to serve on the board or in a position
- Recruiting for positions with no time-frame
Q: Good volunteers never seem to stay very long. What can we do?
Retaining: What Works

- Succession Planning — proactively moving strong volunteers through key positions
- Have time frames for key positions
- Celebrate as a team
- Cultivate camaraderie and friendship
- Do not let someone stagnate in a position
- Address toxic behaviors of volunteers
Retaining: What Doesn’t Work

- Either making or allowing a volunteer to do all the work
- Lack of communication
- Isolating a young alum or older alum
- Not allowing fresh ideas
- Allowing the toxic behaviors of a volunteer to go unchecked
Q: Morale in the club seems to be low, and board members seem uninterested. What can we do?
Rewarding

- Use club funds (budgeting within reason) to:
  - Give gifts to volunteers
  - Have an annual board party
  - Acknowledge retiring volunteers

- Move strong volunteers through prestigious roles

- Send volunteer(s) to the CLAW conference

- Publicly thank volunteers
Retiring

Q: A volunteer has served for many years and is not open to change or trying new events. What can we do?
Retiring

- Build a board culture of “movement” so that everybody understands the plan
- Have an annual cycle that allows board members to stay on or roll off
- Consider renewable terms as part of the bylaws
- Ask volunteers to train their successor as part of their job
- Ask volunteers to either “step up” to the expectation of the job or move on
Guiding Thought:

Be conscious and deliberate about board management
Questions and Comments?
Other Training Modules

- Choosing an Effective Membership Model
- Defining an Effective Board Structure
- Guiding Principles Lead to Great Decisions
- Marketing Your Club to Alumni
- Working with Other Clubs