

THE CELEBRATED
VOLUNTEER



CONSORTIUM FOR
RETENTION

APPROVED WORKMEN ARE NOT ASHAMED

How to Keep Great Volunteers Around

In business, they say it's more cost effective to keep a repeat customer than to attract new ones.

The same can be said for volunteer teams. The time and effort involved in bringing new volunteers on board can be costly to team unity.

So what have Awana® commanders found to be the key to keeping their volunteers involved?

Get them personally invested in the ministry.

Here are a few of their proven retention ideas to try with your team this year.

Ask for feedback ... and use it

One powerful way to give volunteers a sense of ownership is to ask for their opinions about club. Then make sure they see their ideas in action as soon as possible. This means being flexible with your own ministry plans.

"We send out questionnaires to our team. We want everybody's input," says Brian Helf of Albany, New York. "Volunteers see that we're implementing the ideas they gave us. It's a general openness that they've come to expect."

Sharing club tasks makes volunteers feel needed. Let them know you're always there to help them succeed. Offering just the right amount of support is essential to avoiding volunteer burnout.

"When leaders realize it is 'come and serve,' they are more easily inclined to get involved," says Debra Sims of San Diego, California. "The leaders understand we run a tight ship, and they see the value in what we - through God's guidance - are trying to accomplish."



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Show volunteers how to use their spiritual gifts

Ask each volunteer, "Do you feel you're using your gifts and talents in the best way to achieve God's work?" If they don't, give them the freedom to change roles within Awana. Also, remind leaders often that their work is making a spiritual impact.

"Returning leaders have a strong intrinsic value for children and youth to know, love and serve the Lord," says Tom Kleinfeldt of Wood Dale, Illinois. "We place a high priority on working with clubbers to complete their books. Leaders feel good about their efforts, and it builds a sense of team success."

Give volunteers space during the year to learn something new about their role or themselves. Along with Basic Training, incorporate personality and spiritual gift assessments during the year and attend conferences together.

"We've always had at least 90 percent of our leaders go to the Awana Ministry Conference," Brian says. "I'm sure that has a lot to do with our leader retention. When they get around other Awana leaders, it fuels them."

Brian's church encourages volunteers by paying a portion of the cost for their conference tickets. They consider it an investment in their team.

Cultivate relationships

Strong relationships are vital to helping volunteers feel personally invested. Make time to socialize outside of church. Have volunteers and clubbers worship together during the club night. Also, check in with your volunteers often so you know about any potential concerns.

"We have meetings all the time to make sure leaders are doing well in club," Debra says. "We are always seeking the Lord on how to improve in any way."

Whenever possible, get families to volunteer together. It can make your club feel like home, and volunteers will want to stick around. Brian's church has several families serving in Awana, including his own.

"One of our favorite times all week is Sunday night when we get back from Awana," he says. "We have a snack and talk. Everybody has a happy story or a victory to share. I'm sure other families are doing the same thing."

When leaders are personally invested in your club, they will keep coming back. And if you can retain a team of loyal leaders that speaks enthusiastically about serving in Awana, attracting new volunteers will be a cinch!

If you have a story or idea on how to keep great volunteers, please send it to youbelong@awana.org. We'd love to hear from you!



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