

Membership Motivation

Motivation cannot be given. Motivation comes from within. As a leader, your goal is to inspire members to motivate themselves.

Why members don't contribute:

- ▶ Members don't feel their contribution or efforts are meaningful within the collective whole.
- ▶ They don't enjoy the tasks they're being assigned.
- ▶ They feel redundant within the group as though their work doesn't matter.
- ▶ They don't understand how their work contributes to a greater good.
- ▶ They feel lost in the crowd as though their work can go or does go unnoticed.

Conditions for motivation:

- ▶ A member's individual effort is associated with some kind of reward or punishment.
EXAMPLE: Every member who spends 1 hour tabling gets recognized at the beginning of your next general meeting. Create a member-of-the-week reward for members who go above and beyond (this can be a cheap trophy, stuffed tiger, any "reward" item).
- ▶ A member's effort can be more easily evaluated in the collective product.
EXAMPLE: Maintain a public Google doc or spreadsheet of member hours/contributions that everyone can see. They can see how they compare to others.
- ▶ Tasks are perceived as high in meaningfulness or personal involvement.
EXAMPLE: Ask each member which task they feel is most important or that they enjoy the most and allow them to do that task. Use small groups and create or place members on committees that interest them.
- ▶ When the organization can easily compare its success and failure to that of another group or organization.
EXAMPLE: Use one of your meetings to examine what other student organizations are doing well and doing poorly and see how you can improve to be even better than an opposing organization. This is not meant to be malicious or competitive. It just gives a standard of comparison to use.
- ▶ When working with teammates.

EXAMPLE: Make sure the members that are working together know each other. Use a meeting to do team building or ice breakers to allow all members to get to know one another especially as your organization takes in new members.

- ▶ When members expect other organization members to perform poorly.

EXAMPLE: If your organization has struggled in the past give examples of how people didn't step up to assist. Articulate what will happen (worst case scenario) if people perform poorly.

- ▶ A member's efforts within the group are special, unique, and not-redundant with other work being done by others.

EXAMPLE: Try to make tasks as unique as possible. Even if they're similar, identify to each member how their role is unique and important to the success of the whole group.

Tips for motivating members:

- ▶ Communicate WHY something is important for the organization. Most members will appreciate reasoning and logic behind decisions and tasks.
- ▶ When you make a suggestion or a request provide your reasoning.
- ▶ Assign tasks immediately when energy levels and excitement are high.
- ▶ Show members that you have confidence in their abilities and that you expect them to do their best.
- ▶ Trust members to do well (until they don't, and then reevaluate which tasks you assign to them); never assume the worst of someone.
- ▶ Let members know the game plan ahead of time or in the early stages of planning, that way when you ask them to contribute, they're not blindsided by the work.
- ▶ Start and end meetings on time. This demonstrates consistency and a get-things-done attitude.
- ▶ Allow members to do tasks or lead tasks they enjoy most.
- ▶ Thank them for participating.
- ▶ Give them a meaningful supporting role.
- ▶ Ask for help on one, specific, limited-time task.
- ▶ Take some personal time with them.
- ▶ Be as open and transparent about decision made at the leadership level.
- ▶ Share responsibility, don't take all the credit for a success that was really a team effort! Give credit where credit is due.
- ▶ Understand that as a leader you can give authority and allow others to contribute to the group's collective success.
- ▶ Allow members to provide the group with ideas, and if the idea is rejected, provide a reason why.
- ▶ Give members decision making power in decisions that affect them.
- ▶ Don't assign unnecessary tasks.