How to Retain Student Leaders Using the Fish Philosophy

Student Life Office iLead Web Series
What is Retention?
Retention

The act of keeping members actively participating and volunteering in the organization or group they are a part of

No matter how well you do you will have members leave regardless of the effort you put in

A. Student Leaders ten to be over committed and have their “plate” full

B. The meeting time may not work for students

1. Because the meeting time does not work the student becomes disengaged and stops participating in organizational programs

2. By checking in with the student and sending out meeting minutes this could reduce the stress or lack of retention for this reason
Retention

The act of keeping members actively participating and volunteering in the organization or group they are a part of

C. Location of meeting may not be convenient for the student leader

D. Unorganized working space or administration causes frustration and students leave the group

1. An organized or last minute work spaces cause stress on student leaders

2. Student leaders may feel pressured to meet unrealistic deadlines

E. Member may simply move away or leave the institution
Why is Retention Important?
Why is Retention Important?
Negative Effects of Turn Over

Information gets lost and is sometimes confusing

1. People take knowledge with them when they leave
2. Leaders may not always leave written documentation
   a. Rely on the advisor to fill you in and keep you up to date
   b. Have open and honest communication when someone leaves the board to get updates on the projects they were working on

Traditions are not well documented and details can “fall through the cracks”

1. People get into the habit of doing things themselves and not leaving their plan. This leave important details undone or completed last minute.
Positive Effects of Turn Over

**New Ideas**
Allows people to step into positions and bring new ideas to improve or revamp projects

**“Fresh Start”**
Groups may be trying to create a new image or recruit new more dedicated members to improve their organization
Other Reasons Retention is Important

1. When students are not retained, there may be problems the organization is facing
   a. The organization may struggle financially
   b. Leadership may be new and need extra training

2. Without members the organization will be unsuccessful and may collapse
Fish Philosophy

The Fish Philosophy is a theory that is used to boost morale and create a positive working environment for people to enjoy and work together what is fun, educational and positive. There are four parts of the Fish Philosophy:
A. Show someone you care by really listening to what they have to say. Take interest in the person and not just them as a member of your organization.

B. Go out of your way to do something nice!
1. Invest in their interests
2. Know and celebrate their birthday
3. Write “Thank You” notes when they have done exceptional work
A. By acting in positive ways it makes people feel special and may improve their day dramatically.

B. Doing special things every day to make them excited and to make coming to your organization, event, or meeting the best part of their day

1. Have fun ice breakers to get to know each other
2. Create a member of the month, week, or day and give them a special prize
3. Have a “bad day jar” where you can put comments that can encourage individuals in your group and could possibly make their day better
Choose Your Attitude

You are the only person in charge of your attitude and are in full control of how you feel.

1. You can not control the events around you, but you can control the way you handle them.

2. Choosing your attitude is not always easy, but look for individuals who are practicing “being there” and use them as a sounding board to help you with difficult situations.

3. By being positive it helps others around you maintain a positive attitude and increases productivity.
A. Have fun with your organization
   1 By having fun and playing, you could actually increase productivity
   2 When people play and have fun they forget they are working and enjoy the group they are working with
   3 Playing increases morale of the group and strengthens bonds between group members

B. Have a “Fun Day” in place of a meeting

C. “Playing” can also take place during retreats or “Spirit” events and socials for your organization

D. Be Careful to know a time and a place for “play”
   1 Do not “play” during important or “formal” meetings
   2 Set limits to how often you cancel meetings to have “Fun Days”
The Fish Philosophy can be used in a number of different ways. The flexibility and versatility of the theory allows you to use it in your everyday life, at your job, and in your interpersonal relationships. You can apply it to any part of your life and it can make a big difference in your interactions and the way you work with others.
How to Use the Fish Retention
Using the Fish Philosophy creates a positive atmosphere individuals enjoy coming to an being a part of!

- In particular choosing your attitude creates a positive environment. When everyone around you is positive it’s hard to be a negative person.
- When you incorporate the Fish Philosophy in your organization it allows you to be more energetic and engage students who may otherwise feel left out.
The Fish Philosophy incorporates recognition which can be one of the factors of students leaving the organization.

- By making someone’s day it allows you to recognize that person and make them feel important.
- Be there can be as simple as writing a thank you card or having birthday celebrations. Both are great ways to recognize student leaders.
- Incorporating a newsletter or a bulletin board allows you to highlight students who may exemplify certain aspects of the Fish Philosophy.
The sense of belonging is also created by the Fish Philosophy

- Making their day or showing you care by being there gives students a sense of community
- By following the Fish Philosophy it creates a positive support group for students to rely on
- The Fish Philosophy was built with team work in mind and is designed to make everyone feel like they are an active and important part of that group.
Helps members have an input in the group

- By having the ability to make someone’s day it gives members a sense of purpose in the group.
- A great idea to incorporate play and get students involved and have input in the group have them come up with socials and ice breakers to do with the group.
The Fish Philosophy incorporates be there, play, make their day, and choose your attitude into a fun way to retain students and create a more cohesive group.

Fish Philosophy is not only great for retaining students, but also to create new and upcoming student leaders.
Remember to Play, Be There, Make Their Day, and Choose Your Attitude!