



ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

Message from the President

Vision In Action: Creating a Culture of Retention and Recruitment: Recapturing the Joy and Enthusiasm in Our Component

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Component members are the vital links to our existence as an organization. Like the nursing shortage, the immediate focus has changed to retaining current members and, secondly, to continue to recruit for today and tomorrow. ASPAN is not unique in its challenge with retention and recruitment of members. Like other organizations, we strive to be successful in our creative initiatives. So the most common question is, how do we retain and recruit members? In our 'vision in action', ASPAN recognizes the passion of our committed volunteers and leaders. Components continue to work together and reach out to non-members to join and be involved. How can we have a dramatic increase in our membership?

The Maryland Statewide Commission in Nursing Crisis recommended the education and training of nursing leaders for the purpose of retaining and recruiting nurses in the workplace. In April 2004, I had the opportunity to listen to Jo Manion, an educational nursing consultant. She was asked by the Maryland Hospital Association to offer a training program for nurse executives, leaders, and nurse managers. The focus was on the workplace, but the concepts are similar and can be applied in our components. She examined evidence-based practice among experts and conducted a research study herself on retention of nurses in the workplace. The information that I am about to share with you highlights some important concepts and key points, which can easily be applied at the district and component levels and within an organization. I hope to stimulate your thinking. I encourage you to open your minds, thus allowing creativity necessary to influence change in practice.

How do we celebrate our successes and victories? What is the frequency? Often times we wait for those annual recognition ceremonies. This is too long to wait! Why not institute monthly or quarterly awards at the district or component levels? We have more heroes building success at the grassroots levels. Celebrating achievements and recognition of members are important steps to success.

In the culture of retention and recruitment, research studies show similar findings. Money was not a common factor that retained and recruited employees for extended time; members or employees want to feel valued and respected. They like a cohesive and enthusiastic group, where their efforts and contributions are recognized. Members value the strong connections with other members and mentors. Overall, there is a sense of community or family, a place where they belong rather than feeling like an outsider looking in. Leader's responsibilities must be focused on transforming the district, component, and organization into stable, attractive communities or families capable of magnetizing members who show an interest, commitment, and passion for perianesthesia nursing. A sense of community or family invigorates members, creates a sense of purpose, and a feeling of belonging to an integrated group.

Shaeffer and Anundsen described five phases of community development: First, the excitement phase is where you focus on possibilities. Do not expect this phase to last, otherwise you will feel disappointed. Second, the autonomy phase is crucial and difficult. You either have common goals valued by members or you may have conflicts or illusions that can shatter the group. Third, the stability phase entails shared visions and responsibilities. Fourth, the synergy phase is when members start having fun and enjoying the connections with others. Fifth, the transformation is the reevaluation of your direction and sense of purpose. The lack of re-connection to a new purpose may lead the group to disbandment. The cycle

continues in circular motion and, therefore, we need to be cognizant where we came from, where we are currently, and where we are going.

Jo Manion believed that we must learn to focus more on joy in the group, more than focusing on the problems. The joy starts from the beliefs and attitudes of individuals. Self-joy is then manifested, and finally it influences others. Manion's research findings showed major factors of joy: 37% represented the meaning of the work and purpose of involvement, 31% people and relationship, 23% self benefits, and 9% environmental factors. As a district or component, it is important to re-focus on the purpose and values of the group, educate members on ASPAN's mission, strategic plans, benefits, and how they can actively engage in meaningful ways; as leaders and members we must nurture connections and relationships. Open communication is vital in the process to know what works and does not work among the diverse membership. Lastly, we must recognize members and their achievements as often as we can. Remember that as individuals we make a difference; as components, we have an immense power to influence change; and as an organization, our power is unlimited. The 'vision in action' is in our hands, and we must stand united to reach excellence in practice.

One of my strategic goals was the creation of a Membership Recovery Strategic Work Team (SWT). Its purpose is to critically evaluate where we are and where we are going with retention, recruitment, and recognition of members. If you have ideas, you are welcome to share them by contacting Maureen Iacono the SWT Coordinator (maureen.iacono@sjhsyr.org).

Thank you for your support and commitment to ASPAN. Your membership and volunteer efforts are vital components of our success as an organization. Please contact me and let me know how we can better serve your needs (dinaak@comcast.net).

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