

# **Promotion, Recruitment and Retention of Members in Nonprofit Organizations**

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# Promotion, Recruitment and Retention of Members in Nonprofit Organizations

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# Abbreviations

Applicant Tracking System	ATS
Artificial Intelligence	AI
Charity Aid Foundation	CAF
Employee Net Promoter Score	eNPS
Human Resources Management	HRM
Key Performance Indicators	KPIs
Membership Associations	MAS
Millennium Development Goals	SDGs
Multiple-mini Interviews	MMIs
Nonprofit Organization	NPO
Relationship Marketing	RM
Search Engine Optimization	SEO
Situational Judgment Tests	SJTs
Social Added Value	SAV
Small- and Medium-sized Enterprise	SME
United Nations	UN
Values-based Recruitment	VBR

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# Preface

Since the last decade, the number of nonprofit organizations (NPOs) has increased throughout the world. Their role is critical for attending vulnerable groups undergoing complex social issues. However, most of them face management and leadership challenges, due to a lack of effective policies and procedures, communication technologies, financial discipline and control of key performance indicators.

This book focuses in the generation of value for all NPOs' members including top management, shareholders, board members, volunteers, employees, beneficiaries and non-traditional members. However, value is conceived beyond its mentioned members, implying qualitative indicators such as sustainability, wellness and the fulfillment of an NPO's social mission.

The world has experienced changes, and thus, NPOs' management requires the adaptation of paradigms that contribute in the achievement of its mission and objectives. Value perspective is no new argument; however, the novel approach considers relations and benefits for NPOs' members, other stakeholders and the community. Therefore, each member possesses an aggregated value when commitment and active participation leads to change.

NPOs need to implement strategies for the recruitment and retention of such members. In that sense, this work is based on the following research question: the current perspective for value creation of NPOs' members is sufficient for the former recruitment and retention purpose? An objective answer could be based on the need for more active NPOs' participations with better strategies.

NPOs of any size are vulnerable to changes in the environment, due to their strongly correlated subsistence with charity and altruism. In some cases, funds are subdued to the commercialization of a product or service, implying a competitive effort in a globalized market where an increasing number of NPOs and other firms require scarce resources. Thus, the professionalization of its board, top management and staff is mandatory.

It is no secret to state that the agenda for sustainable development is still pending for all actors in society. Its dimensions are multifactorial and diverse; nevertheless, any NPO could actively participate through social innovation by recurring to synergies and alliances with other actors for a sustainable creation of value.

The purpose of this work is to highlight the value of NPOs' members in the aim of fulfilling social missions. However, their significance could not be separated from the conditions of NPOs' operational systems, results and nature of alliances. Thus, any NPO needs to understand, build and strengthen its value creation relations. Finally, the non-profit sector requires motivated, committed and active members valued for their essence and hard work; moved by love, compassion and empathy; and genuinely care for the needs of others.



## Chapter 1

# The Nature of Membership in Nonprofit Organizations

### 1.1. Introduction

This book is proposed with the intention of going beyond the discussion of the scopes and boundaries of nonprofit organizations (NPOs) (Defourny, Grønbjerg, Meijs, Nyssens, & Yamauchi, 2016; Salamon & Sokolowski, 2016). The ways in which a nonprofit institution is conceptualized and how it differs from other types of social institutions are very important to progress in the field. However, from our vision, it is more relevant to clarify that, regardless of the type of NPO to which it refers, its members act and create value to achieve the mission pursued; therefore, members are the central theme of the analysis proposed in this work.

Although there are many organizational and legal structures considered NPOs (voluntary associations or membership associations (MAS), volunteering agencies and foundations), all of them have in common that they all seek a social benefit (e.g., welfare of vulnerable groups or unprotected people) and do not pursue profits, tangible benefits or extraordinary gains. Understanding the nature of membership in NPOs requires considering the perspectives of different disciplines and fields of research such as psychology, management and sociology, among others. The motivation to join an NPO or the incentives offered by the organization to attract potential members to participate define the permanence of the members over time. Therefore, being included as a member in an NPO can help to develop social self-identity, reinforcing the desire to belong, that is, the identity of being accepted in the group and incentivize uniqueness, represented by the value of the particular attributes that a member can offer to the organization.

The studies of NPO membership have traditionally been characterized by understanding what motivates members to participate in different activities, such as volunteers, members of the board, donators, managers, employees and other non-traditional members. Many NPOs have been under increasing pressure to achieve their objectives; thus, they need to use the potential of the creative power of collaboration since it is key aspect of their nature. The development of intra-organizational, inter-organizational or sectoral collaboration processes requires

the interest, attention and willingness of the members involved. Therefore, it is important to understand the nature of the NPOs and the carefulness that members deserve.

## 1.2. Inclusion and Membership

Inclusion is a critical aspect of membership, because individuals require affiliation and to feel connected, valued and trusted (Cottrill, Lopez, & Hoffman, 2014); thus, they need to belong to groups that have higher perceived social identities (Cottrill et al., 2014). At an individual level, inclusion can be understood as

the degree to which individuals feel a part of critical organizational processes, such as access to information, connectedness to co-workers and ability to participate in and influence the decision-making processes. (Mor Barak, 2011, p. 7)

Inclusion implies psychological processes that affect the motivation and behavior of the members (Mor Barak, 2011), since their valuable unique characteristics and their participation in the fulfillment of the tasks and mission of the organization are encouraged. Therefore, organizations need to create a comfortable atmosphere for members to share their true identities (Nishii, 2013). From distinctiveness theory and social identity theory, membership implies belonging and uniqueness in a sociotechnical system. Therefore, formal leadership positions are essential to create inclusion since group members form perceptions according to the treatment that they receive in the organization (Randel et al., 2018). In particular, belongingness and uniqueness are considered critical components of inclusion (Chung et al., 2019). In this sense, Shore et al. (2011) defined inclusion as “the degree to which individuals experience treatment from the group that satisfies their need for belongingness and uniqueness” (p. 1265). Similarly, Chung et al. (2019) developed a work group inclusion scale and found the same components: belongingness and uniqueness. Below, we briefly explain both concepts.

### 1.2.1. Belongingness

The sense of belonging is a core aspect of human existence (Malone, Pillow, & Osman, 2012). Belongingness implies the motivation to be and feel accepted by others (Leary, Kelly, Cottrell, & Schreindorfer, 2013) – a subjective sense of *being a part of* that prevents feelings of loneliness and alienation (Kohut, 1984; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2014). To belong contributes to building and maintaining strong ties, relationships and positive interactions in a stable group; belongingness has two subcomponents: group membership and group affection (Chung et al., 2019).

Previous works have contributed to the topic in different fields (Lee & Robbins, 1995; Patton, Connor, & Scott, 1982). For instance, Lee and Robbins (1995)

proposed three factors for belongingness: companionship involving one-on-one contact, affiliation with small groups and connectedness to a grander social context. Hagerty and Patusky (1995) included social connectedness and social assurance; however, Malone et al. (2012) identified two dimensions: Acceptance/Inclusion and Rejection/Exclusion. Chung et al. (2019) found that belongingness has two subcomponents: group membership and group affection.

Members who feel and perceive that they are included and connected to their social groups seek acceptance, attribute positive traits to other members and use them to develop loyalty, cooperation and trust among themselves (Brewer, 2007; Shore et al., 2011). Thus, belongingness can generate high quality relations with group members, satisfaction and the intention to stay and better perform (Shore et al., 2011).

### ***1.2.2. Uniqueness***

This component is based on the need to see oneself as a unique and differentiated human being (Snyder & Fromkin, 1980) and to maintain a distinctive self-concept (Shore et al., 2011). It has been identified that people who show a favorable self-assessment are more likely to be attracted to and collaborate with an organization (Turban & Keon, 1993). Members of an organization expect their unique characteristics to be valued and required for the group and the organization (Shore et al., 2011), while at the same time, members recognize their unique personal and social features reflected in the other group members (Swann, Jetten, Gómez, Whitehouse, & Bastian, 2012). In this sense, a member expects to be valued for his or her unique and different attributes but also for his or her contributions and performance (Shore et al., 2011).

From uniqueness theory, it is recommended that members maintain a sense of moderate self-distinctiveness (Snyder & Fromkin, 1980), because perceptions of either extreme similarity or extreme dissimilarity to others might be experienced as unpleasant (Lynn & Snyder, 2002). Some benefits of promoting uniqueness in organizational environments are greater social acceptance of interpersonal differences, feeding the emotional satisfaction of the members and producing psychological welfare (Lynn & Snyder, 2002).

Since belongingness and uniqueness are fundamental human needs and are not necessarily mutually exclusive, it has been found that members can simultaneously satisfy both needs through the assumption of a specific role or expressing their individuality within the group (Jansen, Otten, van der Zee, & Jans, 2014) while contributing to the group processes and outcomes (Randel et al., 2018). Moreover, in a culture of inclusion, leaders see and treat others as unique and different (Maltbi & Wasserman, 2007), stimulating vibrant group membership.

## **1.3. Motivations of NPO Members**

What motivates members of NPOs to give their time or resources for the benefit of another person or organization without receiving apparent benefits? The challenge is becoming real, not only for the importance of the theme in times of

generalized economic stagnation, the climate changes, the population migration and the ideological differences, among others, but also for the nature of the human being motivated by his or her search for the common good.

The most influential theories tested in social psychology, which are used to explain human behavior in the NPO context, can be classified in two categories, namely, theories focused on (1) beliefs and attitudes (including the theory of reasoned action from Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975 and its extension, planned behavior theory by Ajzen, 1985) and (2) perceptions of control (including self-determination theory by Deci & Ryan, 1985) to outline the theories explained below, see Table 1.1.

In promotion, recruitment and retention, it is important to understand what motivates members' participation in NPOs, Murray (1964) defined motivation as: "an internally experience – drive emerging from desires, wishes, wants, needs, yearnings, hungers, loves, hates, and fear – that arouses, directs and integrates human behavior" (p. 386). Subsequently, Gorman (2004) states that motivation is an attempt to explain the "why" of behavior. The author stated that certain behaviors provide us with some form of satisfaction or reward that can act as an incentive to engage in such behaviors.

Voluntary membership is seen as a positive feature by society, because an active member of voluntary associations is perceived as useful, compared to other individuals; furthermore, this membership contributes to exercising his/her freedom of choice between different options of NPOs (Jaskyte, 2017).

Bidee et al. (2013, p. 33) define volunteering in NPOs as performing an activity out of free will, on a regular basis and for the benefit of people outside one's own household or family circle, without being remunerated for this work (although certain benefits or reimbursements are allowed).

*Self-determination theory* is the most used to research the motives of the members of the NPOs; this theory is a macro-theory of human motivation, emotion and personality (Vansteenkiste, Niemiec, & Soenens, 2010, p. 105). The vision that individuals have is a natural tendency toward growth, self-construction and inner coherence that is central to this theory, and motivation is a major concern because their roles as a manager, board member, volunteer or employee of an NPO involve mobilizing other members to participate. Based on the theory of self-determination, Edmunds, Ntoumanis, and Duda (2006) described that human motivation will have a certain variation, depending on the motivation being more or less self-determined (autonomous or controlling). The theory of self-determination proposes that the behavior is regulated by three types of motivations: extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation and amotivation. Deci and Ryan (2008) stated that, in the theory of self-determination, the regulations on behavior can take different forms, these regulations are along a continuum of self-determination and this continuum contains identifiable progressions that range from non-self-determined regulation behaviors such as demotivation, external regulation and introjected regulation, to self-determined behaviors from intrinsic regulation. When motivation is autonomous (being the perceived origin or source of one's own behavior), it is related to the individual's values, which means that it takes on greater importance in the study of pro-social behaviors that can be

Table 1.1. Influential Theories in a Nonprofit Context.

Theory	Author	Relevant Topics	Assumptions	Examples in NPO Context
Theory of reasoned action	Fishbein and Ajzen (1975)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– External variables</li> <li>– Behavioral beliefs</li> <li>– Evaluations of behavioral actions</li> <li>– Normative beliefs</li> <li>– Motivation to comply</li> <li>– Attitudes</li> <li>– Subjective norms</li> <li>– Intention to perform the behavior</li> <li>– Behavior</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Individuals are “rational actors” with underlying reasons (i.e., behavioral, normative, and controlled beliefs)</li> <li>– Behavioral intention is the most robust predictor of behavior</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Organ donation (Weber et al., 2007)</li> <li>– Fundraising, advocacy and organizational support (McKeever, Pressgrove, McKeever, &amp; Zheng, 2016)</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– All of the topics of theory of reasoned action +</li> <li>– Controlled beliefs</li> <li>– Perceived power</li> <li>– Perceived control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The same as the theory of reasoned action +</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Blood donation (Charsetad, 2016)</li> <li>– Volunteer retention (Lee, Won, &amp; Bang, 2014)</li> </ul>
Theory of planned behavior	Ajzen (1985)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Amotivation (low intensity motivation)</li> <li>– External regulation</li> <li>– Introjected regulation</li> <li>– Identified regulation<sup>a</sup></li> <li>– Integrated regulation<sup>a</sup></li> <li>– Intrinsic regulation (high intensity motivation)<sup>a</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Individuals have a natural tendency toward growth, self-construction and inner coherence, in addition to developing autonomous regulation of behavior</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Voluntary membership motivations (Bidee et al., 2013; Güntert et al., 2016)</li> <li>– Work efforts of volunteers (Bidee et al., 2013)</li> </ul>

<sup>a</sup> Refers to autonomous motivations, which are the most used in NPO studies.

observed in the NPO context. [Güntert, Strubel, Kals, and Wehner \(2016, p. 313\)](#) categorized two motives as self-determined motives:

1. The motive to express one's altruistic and humanitarian values in volunteering can be aligned with identified regulation of extrinsic motivation—.
2. The understanding motive, with its focus on opportunities for learning and practicing one's skills, can be linked to both types of self-determined motivation (i.e., intrinsic motivation and identified regulation of extrinsic motivation).

[Bidee et al. \(2013\)](#) compiled different studies stating that autonomous motivation leads to positive outcomes such as high performance, psychological well-being, academic achievements, pro-environmental behaviors, work engagement and job satisfaction. The authors found that there is a positive link between the autonomous motivation of the volunteers and the work effort that they face, and the most important finding is that this relationship occurs in all cases studied regardless of the type of NPO of which they are volunteer members.

However, motivations are dynamics and are affected not only for personal factors such as gender, age, status and rewards (social, material, ideological or purposive returns) but also for social and environmental factors, such as religious beliefs, economics and crises and natural disasters, among others; for instance, [Tzifakis, Petropoulos, and Huliaras \(2017\)](#) evaluated the impact of economic crises on NPOs. The authors indicated that there is evidence that NPOs suffer serious economic effects in critical environments; however, a crisis can also have positive effects on NPOs by introducing reforms that increase efficiency, increase the number of volunteers and increase financing by philanthropic foundations. Similarly, the study by [Alfieri, Guidi, Marta, and Saturni \(2016\)](#) that examined whether the motivation to donate blood changed before (2008 – t1) and during (2014 – t2), the period of economic crisis in Iran found that “Donors’ motivation priorities did not vary over time. Values and Self-enhancement motivations are the most prevalent. Knowledge and social motivations decreased [...]” (p. 1).

As noted earlier, another theory used in studies of the motivations of NPO members is the *theory of planned behaviour* ([Ajzen, 1991](#)), which postulates that the intention to undertake a particular action is determined by attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control. Furthermore, this theory involves four elements that define behavior at different levels: the target at which the behavior is directed; the action involved; the context in which the action occurs and the time frame ([Tornikoski & Maalaoui, 2019](#)).

Research ([Charsetad, 2016](#)) consistent with the theory of planned behavior found that the influence of religion on pro-social activities such as blood donation is considerable. The study concluded that, for agencies to recruit new donors, they must use promotional techniques that increase perceived self-control, such as the efficiency of the operation and the quality of the service provided, in addition to the perceived social pressure (subjective norms), in which the roles of friends and family are crucial.

Eventually, the *theory of reasoned action* ([Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975](#)) stated that beliefs shape attitudes, and this relationship, in turn, has an influence on

intentions, seen as the best and most proximal predictor of behavior. For example, in a study that analyzed pro-social behaviors (Zarzuela & Antón, 2015), it was verified that the intention of the collaboration of young people with non-governmental organizations is determined directly by the attitudes that they show toward the organizations themselves and toward social problems in general and by their closest environments, as well as indirectly by the beliefs that they have about social conflicts. Another study of organ donation invited participants to sign an organ donation card (Weber, Martin, Corrigan, & Members of COMM, 2007). This research showed that the participants who decided to sign the card had more positive attitudes about donation and showed greater intentions to sign the card, and their perception was that their reference group would encourage donation.

## **1.4. Collaboration**

Collaboration can be defined as the process by which people, organizations or sectors involved in a problem seek a mutually determined solution, rather than working alone on it (Sink, 1998). The collaborative capability is a core capability that implies interactive efforts, collective behavior and cooperative actions through social networks to achieve joint goals. It requires voluntary and autonomous membership, because each member retains his/her independent decision-making powers in the process of achieving a transformative purpose or increasing his/her capacity by taking advantage of shared resources (Wood & Gray, 1991).

Collaboration has been studied in the nonprofit sector since at least the 1980s, and the interest of researchers has remained to the present (Gazley & Guo, 2015). NPOs cannot fulfill their mission by themselves; they are interconnected with government authorities and agencies, other NPOs, volunteers, board members, staff, donors and community networks, among others, which can contribute to mobilizing collaborative efforts to achieve better results. Collaborative actions are immersed in positive social relationships and effective emotional connections between the actors (Austin, 2000; White, 2020), and these actions are developed from alliances with different types of linkages and intensity levels within a continuum of low to high integration (Gajda, 2004) to achieve organizational objectives.

NPOs that work in complex social contexts and have limited resource challenges must develop intra-organizational and inter-organizational collaborative capabilities and implement them in strategies (Huxham, 1993; van Winkelen, 2010). Intra-organizational collaboration implies that the NPOs develop routines among internal networks to be efficient, generate knowledge and innovate (Kelley, Peters, & O'Connor, 2009). Instead, inter-organizational collaboration indicates the cooperation among external partners in the same or cross-sector “within a complex and multi-layered political, organizational, and social system” (Gazley & Guo, 2015, p. 6). Inter-organizational collaboration facilitates the interaction of networks that share information and resources between them to create knowledge, innovation and value (Alexiev, Volberda, & van den Bosch, 2016; Le Pennec & Raufflet, 2018). Since a “collaborative advantage” cannot be created alone, joint work is necessary to obtain the value and mutual goals (Guo & Acar, 2005; Huxham & Vangen, 2005).

1.4.1. Process of Collaboration

Achieving collaboration implies a process on a continuum on which each form of interaction is appropriate according to the particular circumstances, level of trust, commitment, time, shared power and co-responsibilities (Bailey & Koney, 2000). Collaboration as a type of strategic interaction can be used by any organization to achieve a common shared goal, create value and even solve problems and conflicts. Often, collaboration is negotiated and seeks temporary or permanent inter-actions. Below, five different propositions of the levels of interaction and their characteristics are presented. Fig. 1.1 shows a compilation of the components.

From the perspective of strategic alliances' interactions, Peterson (1991) proposes a continuum of three forms of interaction (Gajda, 2004): (1) cooperation, which operates through independent groups with defined roles, and they share mutual information and formal communication and have consideration and support to achieve certain goals; (2) coordination, through which independent parties share information and resources, maintain frequent communication and some shared decisions and align activities and events that support mutually beneficial goals; and (3) collaboration, in which members belong to a system that maintains frequent communication, and individual entities transfer a degree of independence to achieve shared goals.

Additionally, Hogue (1993) suggests a five-level continuum toward community-based collaboration. The levels range from less to more potential and integration for community development considering aspects such as purpose (shared vision), structure (mutual understanding and sharing of resources) and processes. Therefore, the levels of this community linkage model are networking, cooperation or alliance, coordination or partnership, coalition and collaboration. The latter is perceived as enduring and stable, with a clear purpose in terms of shared vision, collective objectives and benchmarks.

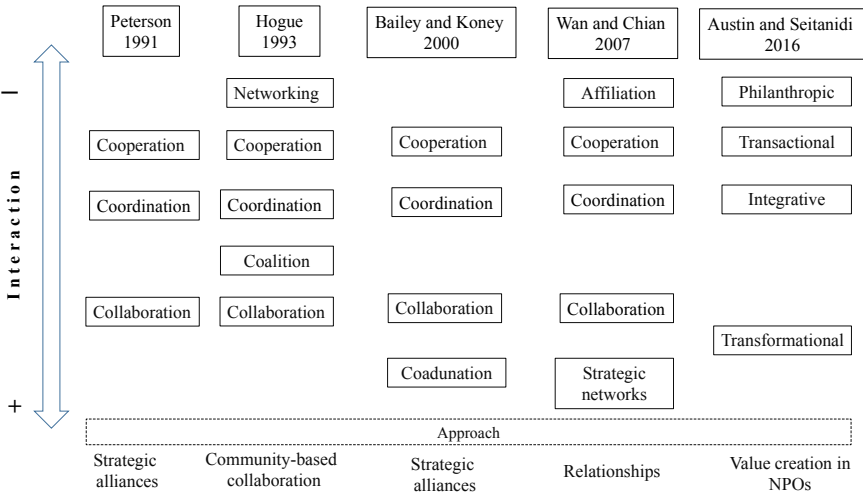


Fig. 1.1. Stages of Interaction Models for Collaboration.