



**GrowthZone**  
smarter association software

# ASSOCIATION OPERATIONS TOOLKIT



## WE'VE GOT TO STOP MEETING LIKE THIS

*Tips for planning and running efficient meetings*



## THE STAFFING SOLUTIONS PLAYBOOK

*44 low-cost or free ideas to reduce employee turnover and improve morale*



## WHY USE AMS

*How AMS software maximizes efficiency and empowers association members*

# WE'VE GOT TO STOP MEETING LIKE THIS!

## Discover How To Plan & Run Efficient Meetings

Communication is key to workplace efficiency. And there are times when that communication requires face-to-face meetings. These meetings can be a model of efficiency or go on forever with no measurable accomplishments.

Setting up an effective meeting is more than emailing the time and location to attendees. With a little planning and extra effort, you can run meetings that meet objectives, produce results, and leave participants with a sense of accomplishment.

**1. Define the objective:** Ask yourself what you are trying to accomplish. Are you:

- Looking for a decision?
- Generating ideas?
- Receiving status reports?
- Communicating something?
- Making plans?
- Certain you even really need to have the meeting?

**2. Have an agenda:** That bears repeating. Have an agenda. Send it out before the meeting so people can be prepared, have input, and give feedback (who knows, maybe you'll find out a scheduled discussion isn't needed because that project is already completed). Include a schedule and a timeline on topics – and stick to it! A typical agenda includes:

- Date, time, and location
- Who will attend
- Topic(s) that will be addressed and the intended outcome
- The order of topics
- Who will lead discussion on topics
- Time allotted for each topic – make it realistic
- Participants' roles in the meeting (so they can prepare)



Arrange for someone to take detailed notes during the meeting – that way you can focus on keeping the meeting on track. Encourage them to keep a summary of discussion points being made, actions steps, and decisions.

# WE'VE GOT TO STOP MEETING LIKE THIS!

## Discover How To Plan & Run Efficient Meetings

**3. Who to include:** Don't waste people's time — it's too valuable. Participants should either be decision-makers or essential to the process. Not sure if someone should be included? Ask if they would like to attend or would prefer to receive the minutes later.

**4. Be punctual:** Respect the time and effort of those that show up on time. Don't delay the meeting due to the tardiness of other attendees (and don't waste time updating latecomers).

**5. Keep on track:** Keep everyone focused on the agenda. If unrelated discussion topics arise, get them back on track — rambling, non-relevant discussions are disruptive and impact work flow. Provide a quick summary after each agenda topic, confirm everyone agrees that it's accurate, and then move on.

**6. Stay on schedule:** End the meeting on time. If it's running behind, push for a decision, table the discussion, or schedule a separate meeting on that topic.

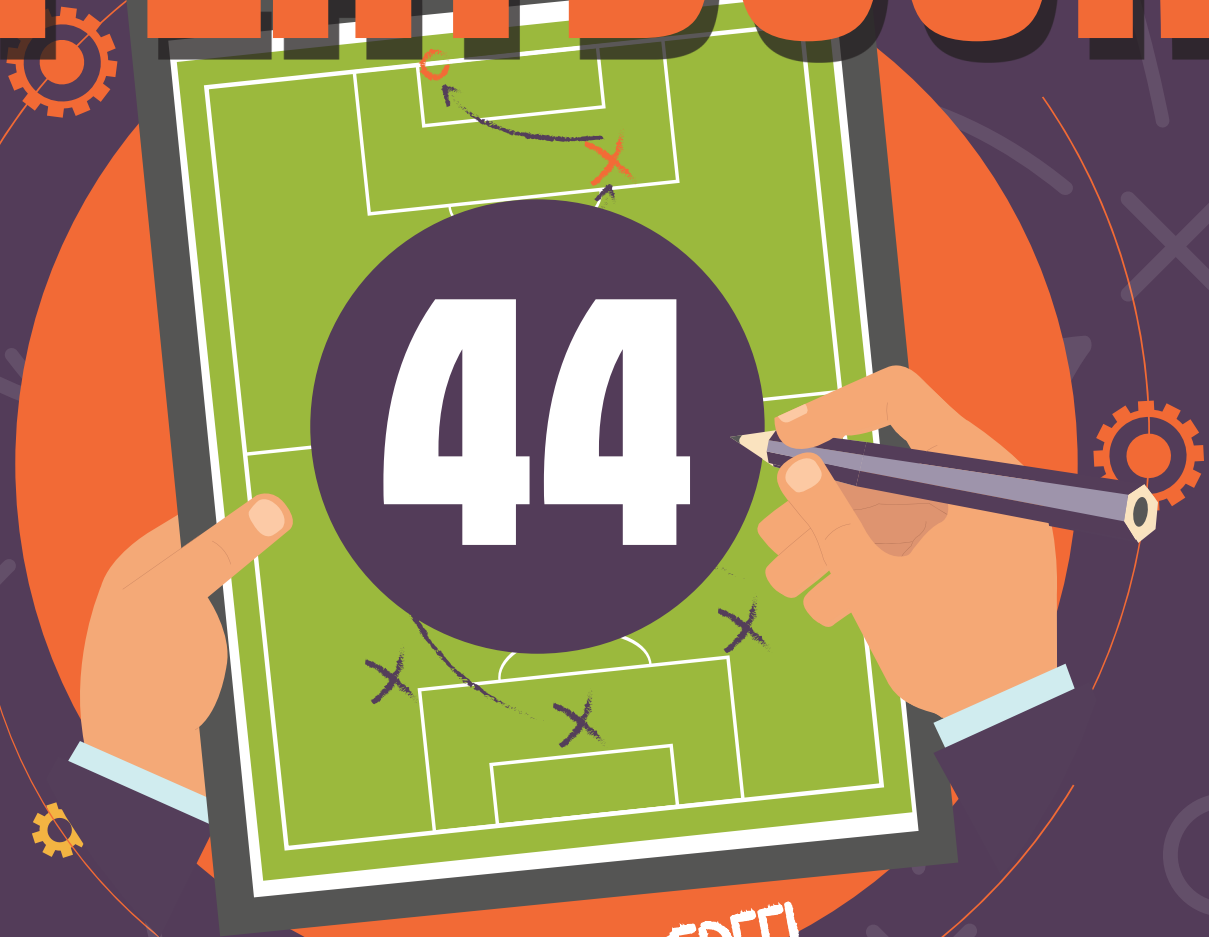
**7. Participation:** There are always one or two people that love to hear themselves talk. Avoid letting them dominate the discussion. If someone is dominating, ask others (by name) for their thoughts. It's critical that everyone contribute. If their input isn't important or necessary, is their attendance really necessary?

**8. Follow up:** Send a follow-up summary as soon as possible. Include information on what was accomplished, decisions that were made, assigned action items, and next steps. Ask for feedback on how the meeting could have been improved.

Remember, effective meetings successfully accomplish their objectives in a minimum amount of time, have good attendee participation, and leave people with a clear sense of the next steps to be taken.

You won't get it perfect the first time – maybe not even the first few times. But your efforts will be appreciated, and practice makes perfect!

# THE STAFFING SOLUTIONS PLAYBOOK



OR FREE!

44 LOW-COST IDEAS TO  
**REDUCE EMPLOYEE TURNOVER**  
& **IMPROVE MORALE**



**GrowthZone**  
smarter association software

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**INTRODUCTION - EMPLOYEE TURNOVER..... PAGE 2**

**TIME OFF ..... PAGE 3**

**MONEY TALKS ..... PAGE 4**

**MORALE..... PAGE 5-7**

**AWARDS, RECOGNITION, AND PRAISE ..... PAGE 8**

**COMMUNICATE, ENCOURAGE, AND INCLUDE ..... PAGE 9**

**NEW EMPLOYEES ..... PAGE 10-11**

**THE 5-STEP PRIDE PROCESS ..... PAGE 12**

**CONCLUSION ..... PAGE 13**

**ABOUT GROWTHZONE ..... PAGE 14**



# INTRODUCTION

## Employee turnover is bad for business.

Employee turnover is a common challenge for membership organizations and can have a major impact on your success.

Turnover is disruptive, costs money, and impacts employee morale. The actual cost is difficult to measure, but may include increased workloads, overtime expenses, and reduced productivity associated with low employee morale. Not to mention the recruitment costs and time and resources needed to train new people.

But turnover is preventable—or at least manageable. The key is to focus on a changing workforce culture and recognize that quality of work life is becoming more important to employees of all backgrounds. Each membership organization needs to develop a retention strategy.

Try some of these ideas—and be sure to let us know how they work for your organization.



### How To Calculate Employee Turnover

Measure turnover rate by dividing the number of annual terminations by the average number of employees in the work force. For example, if you have an average of nine employees and two have left (for any reason) in the last 12 months, divide two by nine. The result is a 22% turnover.



**= 22% TURNOVER**

## TIME OFF | IDEAS 1-6

If there's one perk that offers the most gain with the least pain, it's time off and flexible work schedules.

1. Give employees the option of working an altered schedule that accommodates family, commuting, school, or personal work preferences.
2. Close the office early on Halloween (reminder: letting employees know of early closures so they can plan with their families is always appreciated).
3. Provide a once-a-month pass for a longer lunch hour or to come in late or leave early—with the understanding that the time doesn't have to be made up later.
4. Give employees a free vacation day on their birthday (or to be used within 30 days).
5. Depending on your season or workload, add summer (or winter) hours to your official benefits package. Or allow staff to work an extra half hour Monday through Thursday and then leave early on Friday.
6. Establish a work-from-home policy. One day per week (or month) can be productive if there is no need for face-to-face meetings.



Time off and latitude in determining work schedules can be a significant contributor to staff morale and employee retention.



## MONEY TALKS | IDEAS 7-14

### Do you have businesses in your neighborhood that are willing to trade with you?

Are there Board members or member businesses that can help supply perks to your staff? Work on inexpensive ways to provide monetary value to your employees.

7. Arrange for an employee discount at nearby restaurants and coffee shops that your staff regularly frequents.
8. Reward each employee's work anniversary with a bonus or gift card.
9. Take a poll if employees prefer twice-monthly or bi-weekly paychecks.
10. Negotiate rates for your employees with area childcare providers.
11. Reward employees' children with a gift card for good report cards.
12. Offer medical insurance for pets.
13. Provide a \$5-10 bonus for each week they work, payable on their birthday.
14. Buy movie theater tickets in bulk and make them available at a substantial discount to employees.





## MORALE | IDEAS 15-20

**Remember, there is a direct relationship between staff morale and retention.**

Are there Board members or member businesses that can help supply perks to your staff? Work on inexpensive ways to provide monetary value to your employees.

15. Free coffee is the norm for offices these days. How about putting water, pop, and tea in the mix? Stock the kitchen with healthy snacks or at least subsidize the soda and snack vending machines.
16. Provide lunch once a month or at least allow enough time for a regular monthly potluck.
17. Have a masseuse come in for chair massages. Many times a local chiropractor will do this for free in order to drum up business.
18. Lose the shoes. A slippers Thursday or flip-flop Friday can make employees feel right at home.
19. Have monthly work anniversary and birthday celebrations.
20. Treat employees by providing tickets to a baseball game (or other fun event).



## MORALE | IDEAS 21-24

- 21.** Create a dog-friendly workplace—1 in 5 companies allow pets in the workplace. <sup>1</sup>Companies that allow pets see a lower rate of absenteeism, more willingness to work longer hours, and an overall more productive environment.
- 22.** Encourage employees to “unglue” from their computers. Have recess a couple of times a week for 20 minutes. Get them to spend a few minutes together catching up with one another and maybe getting fresh air and exercise.
- 23.** End the email arms race to prove who’s the hardest worker: Are employees cc’ing each other on every email? Sending a barrage of back-and-forth messages? Emailing late at night or over the weekend (to prove their dedication)? Put a stop to it. Declare a policy of “no unnecessary emails” and writing at odd hours. They may not admit it, but they’ll be glad you did.



- 24.** Provide a \$50 grooming perk twice a year—employees can use it for a manicure, pedicure, or a haircut. Negotiate the package with a local salon.



<sup>1</sup>American Pet Products

## MORALE | IDEAS 25-27

25. Are you keeping employees waiting while you finish up phone calls? Do you have regular meetings that no one knows the purpose of? It's time to stop and consider that this might be sending a message to your staff that their time doesn't really matter.
26. No reserved parking spaces (or similar perks just for executives/long-timers)—everyone is an equal.
27. Surprise them (in a good way): People adjust pretty quickly to expectations. Many workers see year-end bonuses as an expected lump form of salary. (You expect presents on your birthday, right?) But getting a present out of the blue can be very meaningful. Are summer doldrums taking over your staff? Call an emergency meeting for the next day—and then announce that everyone can have the afternoon off and you'll stay to handle things at the office.

When employees feel appreciated and valued, they're less likely to leave the companies they work for. DON'T focus on why these ideas won't work. Just set an initial goal to make just 2-3 a reality. The results might surprise you.



## AWARDS, RECOGNITION, & PRAISE | IDEAS 28-33

**Employees who receive recognition for their talents and skills generally have higher levels of job satisfaction, are more likely to be motivated, and exhibit better retention rates.**

- 28.** A sincere “thank you” goes a long way. Don’t avoid it because you are nervous about appearing awkward or insincere, or embarrassing the employee. Practice makes perfect.
- 29.** Send simple appreciation emails at the completion of a project. Consider reporting individual accomplishments up the chain to the Board.
- 30.** Pass the bucks. Hand out Bonus Bucks (think Monopoly Money) to employees that have done something outstanding. The bucks can eventually be traded in for real goods, time off, or gift cards.
- 31.** Send monthly memos outlining achievements of your team (no negatives, only positives).
- 32.** Start a Clutch Award program by recognizing staff members who have come through in the clutch in supporting the organization in a special way.
- 33.** Offer a “Boss Does Your Chores” pass, where the management team is responsible for performing the more menial duties of its staff members.



Employees who feel appreciated are more productive and loyal. Step outside of your comfort zone and see how it goes.



## COMMUNICATE, ENCOURAGE, AND INCLUDE | IDEAS 34-38

### Keeping employees involved and informed is fundamental to their satisfaction.

Employees who experience open communication with their employer tend to be more loyal. When they feel that their opinions are valued, they are generally more engaged with their work. Most employees leave managers, not companies.<sup>2</sup>

34. Don't expect employees to read your mind. When you hand over a new project, it's your responsibility to ask them what's already on their plate and help them prioritize.
35. Do you update your employee benefits communications? And, when was the last time you explained to your employees how much their total compensation is worth?
36. Assess your performance evaluation strategy. Employees are hungry for feedback. Reviews have greater impact when employees feel they are part of the process of establishing goals and milestones. Continue evaluations with short but regular feedback meetings where you review employees' "keep-doing," "start-doing," and "stop-doing" activities.
37. No one wants to be kept in the dark. Keep staff members informed of decisions early, involve them in the decision-making process when possible, and explain your thought process so they understand where you're coming from.
38. Avoid assuming your employees are happy. Ask them for feedback either anonymously or through scheduled brown bag lunches where they can offer suggestions on improving their workplace experience.



Keep your staff in the loop and be a high-feedback organization. That alone should save some of the costs of employee retention and recruitment.

<sup>2</sup>[zanebeneAts.com](http://zanebeneAts.com)

## NEW EMPLOYEES | IDEAS 39-41

### Have a new-employee onboarding strategy in place.

Breaking the ice for a new staff member helps them to feel welcome while giving them the confidence and resources to quickly make an impact within the organization.

- 39. Give a welcome gift. A new employee is going to have a case of the nerves on the first day. Make the day easier by starting with a small gift on their desk.
- 40. Have the employee's workstation set up. It makes a big difference for them to walk into a new office and have their computer, phone, desk, and email set up and working.
- 41. Have a buddy program. Ask a co-worker to show the new hire which printer to use, where the breakroom is, how to close up, etc.



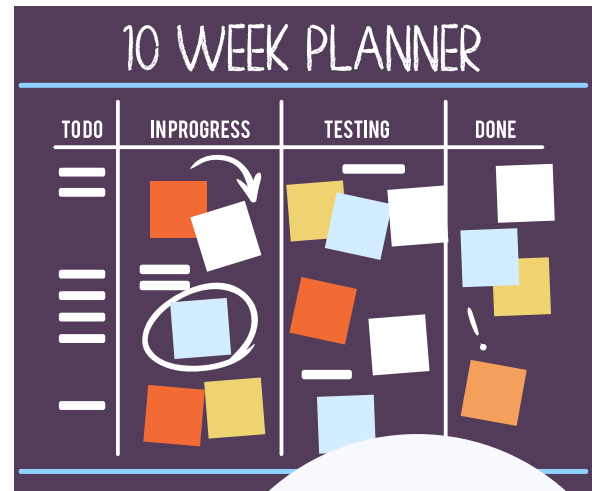
Many small businesses have an onboarding program to help reduce employee turnover. Nearly a quarter of employee turnover occurs in the initial 45 days of employment.<sup>3</sup> New employees who go through a structured onboarding program are 58% more likely to be with the organization after three years.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup>forbes.com

<sup>4</sup>recruiter.com

## NEW EMPLOYEES | IDEAS 42-44

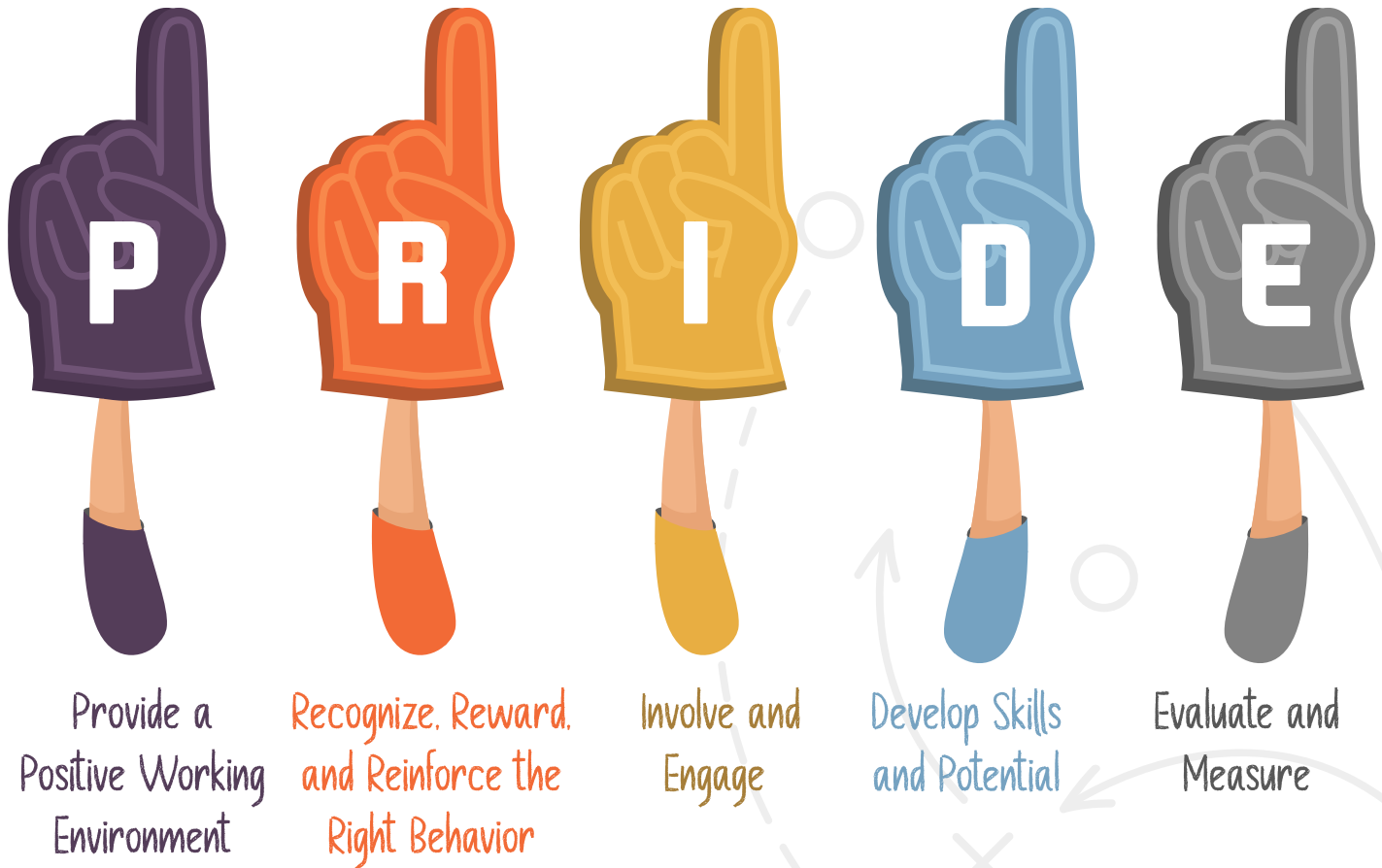
- 42.** Be sure to communicate about where to park, what time they can leave, where to hang their coat, when they can take lunch, where to put things in the refrigerator, etc. No one wants to ask these things.
- 43.** Don't wait to let the employee know you appreciate their contributions. At the end of the week, give a small token of appreciation and a thank you note recognizing their hard work.
- 44.** Have a 10-week plan in place. It doesn't have to be detailed, but engaging employees is critical in retention.



Most importantly, remember that onboarding doesn't stop after the first day. Take advantage of this time period to make sure your new hire feels that their contributions are valued and their efforts are appreciated.

# THE 5-STEP PRIDE PROCESS

Characteristics of a positive workplace can be summarized by remembering the 5-Step PRIDE process<sup>5</sup>:



“Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it.”

~ William Arthur Ward



<sup>5</sup>businessknowhow.com



## CONCLUSION

### Attracting and retaining top talent doesn't have to mean a top of the pay scale salary.

A key factor in overcoming hiring hurdles and retention issues is to create an environment where new ideas are encouraged, productive work is rewarded, and people are allowed to stretch themselves to take on new roles and responsibilities. Achieve this through creating and implementing a program that differentiates your organization from other workplaces.



## ABOUT GROWTHZONE

---

GrowthZone AMS helps organizations grow and retain membership, engage and inform members and prospects, and streamline tedious tasks.

The cloud-based system is powerful, easy to use, and designed to manage all the day-to-day operations of our organization.

### GrowthZone Website Services

Whether you simply want to populate your existing website with useful GrowthZone website Modules, edit your own website with a content management system, or launch a new website from scratch, we have an experienced developer and design team who will accommodate your objectives and budget.

GET A DEMO

# Why Use Association Management Software?

## WHAT IS AMS?

Association Management Software (also known as AMS) offers member-based organizations the tools to run day-to-day operations & provide services to their members.

## IT'S ABOUT YOUR TIME

### Member Data Management

Save time & money by eliminating multiple software applications.

### Reporting

Measure your organization's performance with customizable reports.

### Financial Management

Enter data once and it syncs with your accounting software.

### Website Control

Use your existing site or a brand new, mobile-friendly website.

### Mobile Apps

Use AMS mobile apps to accomplish tasks anywhere, anytime.



## IT'S ABOUT YOUR MEMBERS

### Communication

Stay in contact using one system that syncs with your email & social media.

### Events

Boost event attendance with online registrations and payments.

### Engagement & Retention

Enable online member sign-ups, dues renewals, and profile updates.

### Non-dues Revenue

Increase member exposure and generate revenue with website ads.



## IT'S ABOUT OUR PROMISE

### Smooth Transition

Get up & running easily with GrowthZone – no IT department required.

### Unlimited Support

Receive training & unlimited support from Minnesota-based professionals.

### Proven Track Record

Be confident because GrowthZone is trusted by over 2,000 organizations.

### Money-Back Guarantee

Sign up is risk-free with no contracts and our money-back guarantee.



1 800.825.9171 ☎

[www.growthzone.com](http://www.growthzone.com) 🌐

[sales@growthzone.com](mailto:sales@growthzone.com) ✉

 **GrowthZone**  
smarter association software