

## Unmotivated Volunteers? Up the Intensity.

Blog  
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Intensity increases when we apply greater energy over a shorter period of time. That is somewhat counterintuitive. Common sense might suggest that adding intensity would deplete our energy. Yet applied in the right way, intensity actually has the opposite effect.

Think about workouts. For years I tried to regularly hit the gym. My goal was to go four times a week for an hour each time. I was never able to maintain this schedule and therefore never saw results. Then I started working with a trainer who increased the difficulty of my cardio and weight training, while decreasing the amount of time I spent at the gym. The end result was more progress, more quickly and with more commitment (I'm still regularly working out eight years later).

Many people perform better and become more energized when facing higher intensity challenges. Their drive often comes from stepping out of their comfort zone to take on a higher level of responsibility.

*How does this apply to your volunteers?*

If volunteers in your organization are starting to show reduced motivation, it may be because their work is not intense enough. If the role has a long time commitment and no change in responsibility, it may have become too easy, or quite frankly, boring.

When I have the opportunity to volunteer on a project that is challenging, essential to the success of an organization I care about, and has a critical deadline, I get goose bumps. I have to stop myself from diving 100% into my volunteer work at the expense of ignoring everything else on my to-do list.

To ignite the volunteers in your organization, present them with a new opportunity. Increase the intensity of their contribution by asking them to take on a role with greater responsibility (think shorter time period too!).

The results may be so powerful that they re-energize you, your volunteer, *and* your organization.

*Up the intensity with tomorrow's workshop: [Knowledge Philanthropy: How to Find and Engage External Talent](#)*