

**Philana Thompson**

2022 ADDC President

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Merrion Oil & Gas Corporation

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This year like all those in the past focused on membership, what I found to be the hardest to tackle are recruiting and maintaining membership! What I hear from our members are they do not feel comfortable suggesting or asking to do new things, they are not being given the opportunity to step up and learn and volunteer on committees or boards and when they do, they are being criticized for not doing it the right way.

Being a part of other non-profit organizations, I have had many great leaders share information and websites full of guidance, and these items really hit home:

1. **Can’t recruit new volunteers.** How many new volunteers have you had sign up within a month? It’s a problem if your nonprofit struggles to find and retain volunteers. Volunteers are like employees: they won’t do their best if they feel they’re not appreciated. Volunteers want to feel as if they’re a part of something big, not a dictatorship.
2. **Current volunteers leave or don’t show up**. volunteers want to feel appreciated. They also want to be a part of the organization by having their ideas listened to and discussed. If the nonprofit management team ignores volunteers, your organization won’t stay open for long.
3. **Decisions are hindered by too many decision makers**.  If the nonprofit management team puts up obstacles and roadblocks every time something needs to be approved, the organization will fold. There’s a time and a place to get approval from the board of directors. However, if qualified volunteers are questioned about this or that all the time, they’ll walk and help another organization.
4. **The organization is outdated, tired and old.** How long has the organization been in business? If it’s been 10 years or more, it could be time to close or regroup. A nonprofit that hasn’t kept up with the changing times is in danger of closing. **Why? Because there’s one constant in life and that’s change. If you’re not changing, you’re dying.**

Source: https://savvy-writer.com/nonprofit-management/

Just because something has always been done a certain way does not mean it has to continue to be done that way. Are we ready to step back and let those who are wanting to learn and serve take us to the next level! I want to give a shout out to Linda Rodgers & Nell Lindenmeyer for being just that, long time members who helped guide myself and others like me who wanted to give back to an organization that has done so much for us. They let me grow and make mistakes without criticism but were by my side to offer feedback and support. Who when I asked, “Can I make this change?” and they said, “You most certainly can!” I did not always do things like those before me, but I know those before me did what was best for ADDC during that moment in time for its members or we would not have made it this far.

We need mentors to help these next generations find their own path and take this organization into the future! ADDC has so much to offer, and we have a great platform to continue to offer education about our industry, networking and building friendships for another 71+ years. We have the keys to the past and the future within our membership, as I said in my president’s report at convention, I will not go down without a fight. I am not ready to admit defeat because we are outdated, tired & old! Those coming up are the key to the future and we need mentors to guide them, not hold them back! With demanding jobs and family needs, who would want to put energy into something that provided no value, feeling ignored or not appreciated and not heard!

Combatting membership decline will require forward-thinking and a willingness to change and adapt new policies and processes. Additionally, not every approach may work, so understanding that and knowing that we can always try a different approach if one does not work.

We will be sending out a membership survey soon we need your honesty, and we need your thoughts on how we move forward.

Prayers and Blessings!

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