Project Management Symposium

Building High Performing Volunteer Teams: The Opportunities, Challenges, and Rewards

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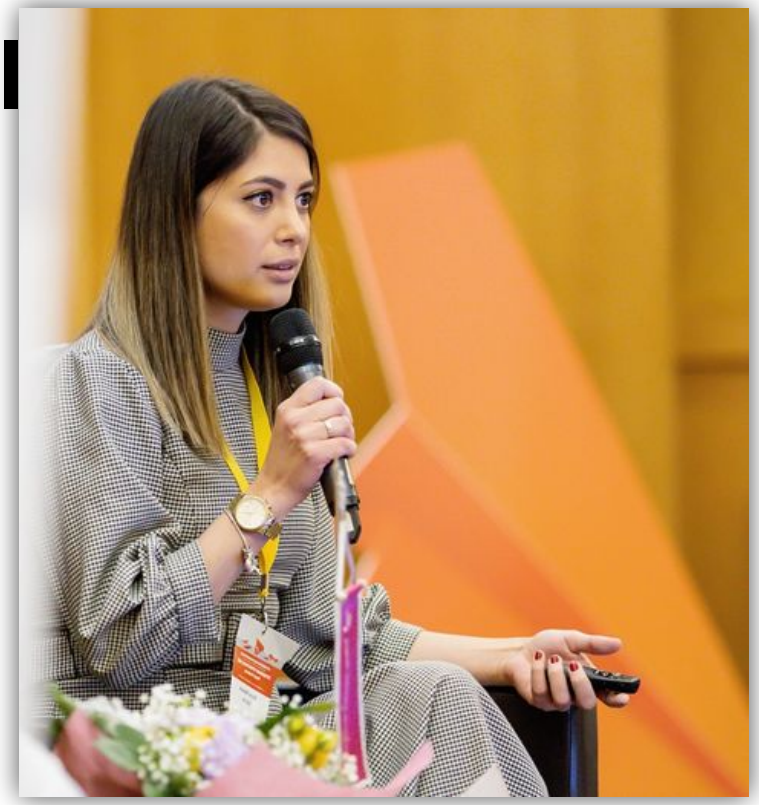

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Volunteers are The Heartbeat of Non-Profit Organizations.

Volunteers are often the driving force behind the success of non-profit and community-based initiatives.

1. **Economic Value:**

"Volunteers contribute an estimated **$187.7 billion** to the United States through their time, talent, and effort (Independent Sector, 2020)."

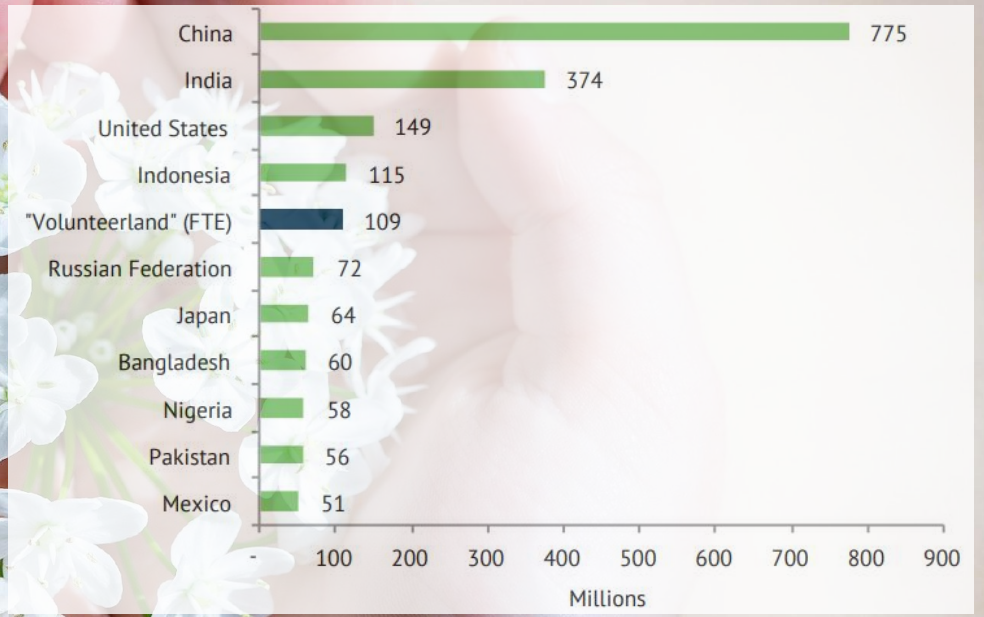

Figure 1 | FTE global volunteer workforce vs. employment in ten most populous countries
FTE: full-time equivalent

Figure-1 ref: Employment (15+) International Labour Organization modelled estimates, accessed 2017 (via ILO Stat)

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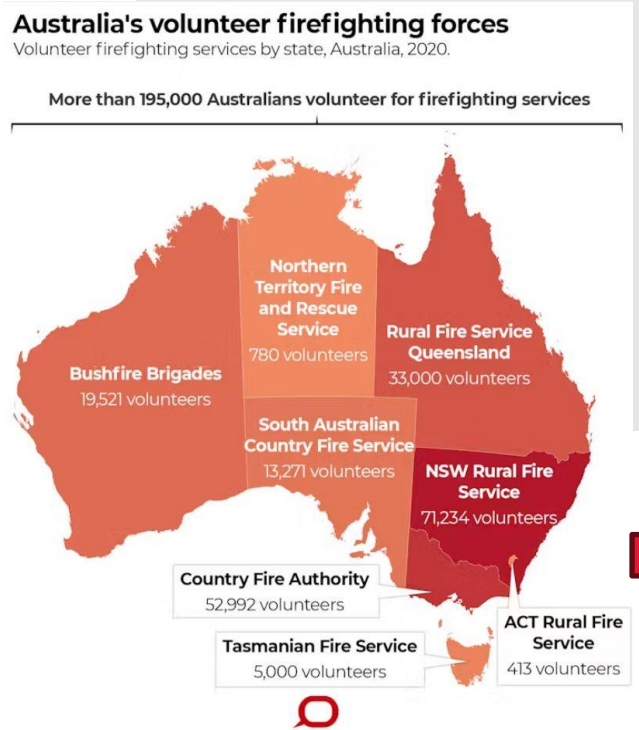
1. Economic Impact



2. Community Impact

In 2019, volunteers in Australia contributed over **520 million hours** in community service (Volunteering Australia, 2019)."

3. Advocacy and Awareness

Mention the role of volunteers in raising awareness. During the 2020 wildfires in Australia, volunteers played a crucial role in awareness and **rescue operations**, demonstrating the **power of collective action.**"

At the average weekly Australian wage, the volunteers contribute about **A$1.3 billion** to the community.

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Volunteers aren't just free labor; they are passionate individuals looking to make a difference.

Why do we volunteer?

Many are motivated by the desire to contribute positively to society and **make a difference in their community**.

Volunteering offers a sense of achievement and personal satisfaction, with **94% of people reporting improved mood** from volunteering (HelpGuide.org, 2020).

Volunteers often seek to develop new skills or gain experience in a particular field. 73% of employers would recruit a candidate with volunteering experience over one without (LinkedIn Survey, 2019).

Volunteering provides an opportunity to meet new people, build friendships, and strengthen community ties.

Passion for a specific cause or issue drives many to volunteer, helping to support and advocate for matters they care deeply about.

Challenges in Volunteer Management

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1. Recruitment & Retention	**Engaging and keeping** volunteers, especially in a competitive landscape.	Average volunteer **retention rate** is about **65%**, indicating a significant drop-off.
2. Training & Development	Providing adequate and ongoing training for diverse volunteer roles.	Limited resources for training programs, impacting volunteer **effectiveness and satisfaction.**
3. Resource Allocation	Many volunteer programs operate with less than **10% of their budget** allocated to volunteer management.	Balancing the budget between **volunteer needs and organizational goals.**
4. Communication Barrier	Diverse volunteer backgrounds and remote volunteering increase the **complexity of effective communication**.	Organizations should create **simple and streamlined communication methods** for volunteers.
5. Impact Measurement	Demonstrating **the value and impact** of volunteer contributions.	Organizations often lack the tools to **effectively measure** and communicate the impact of volunteer work.

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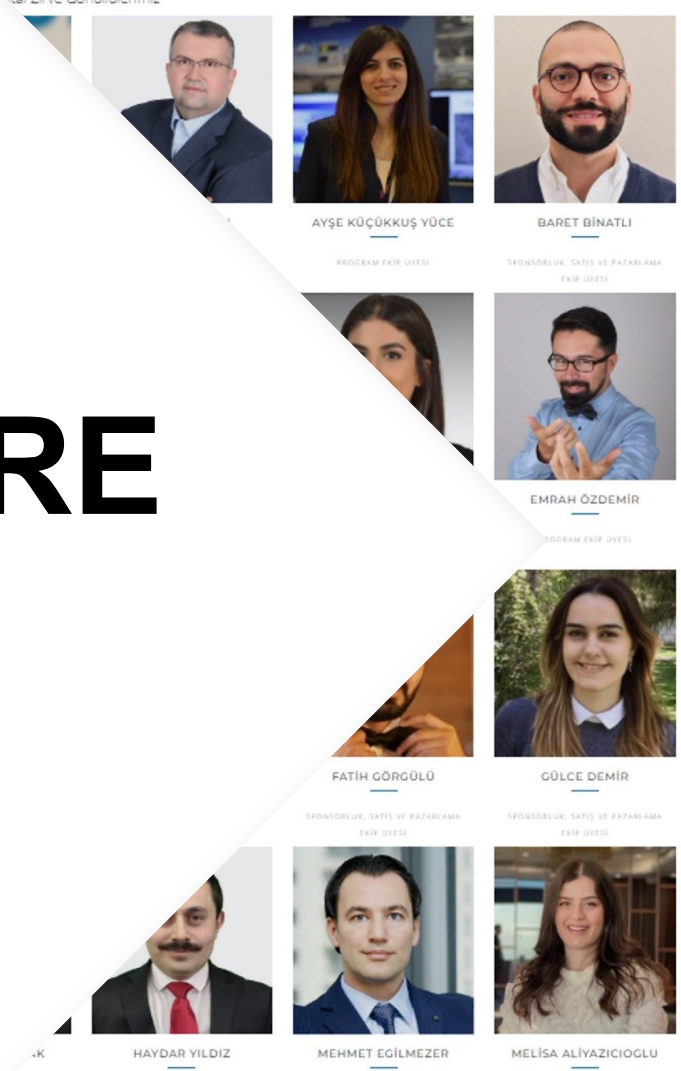
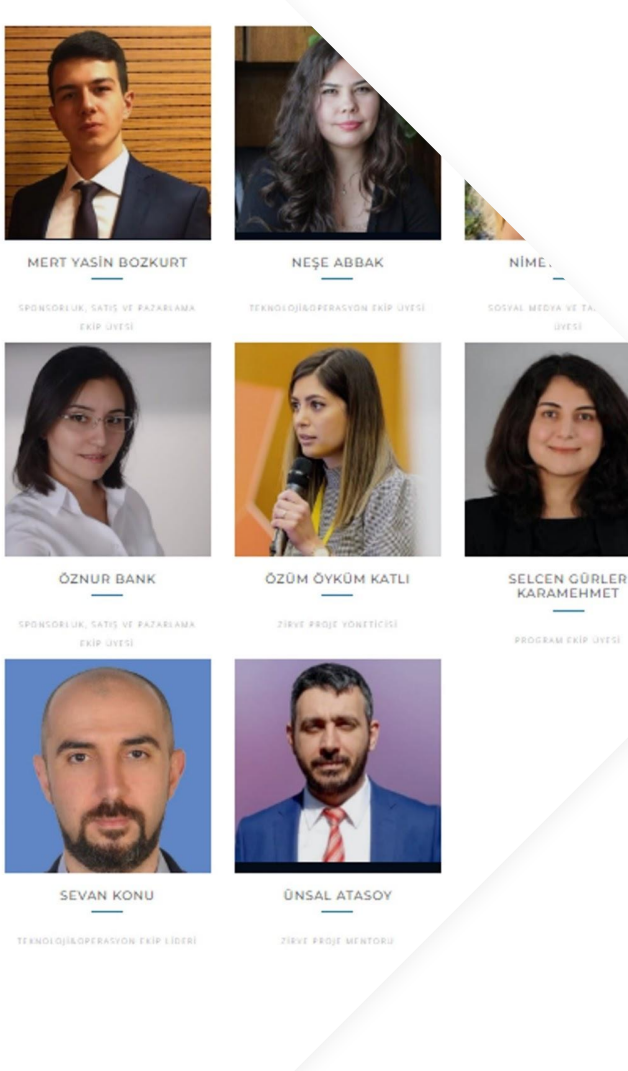
WHO ARE WE?





By the Numbers:
The PM Summit Snapshot

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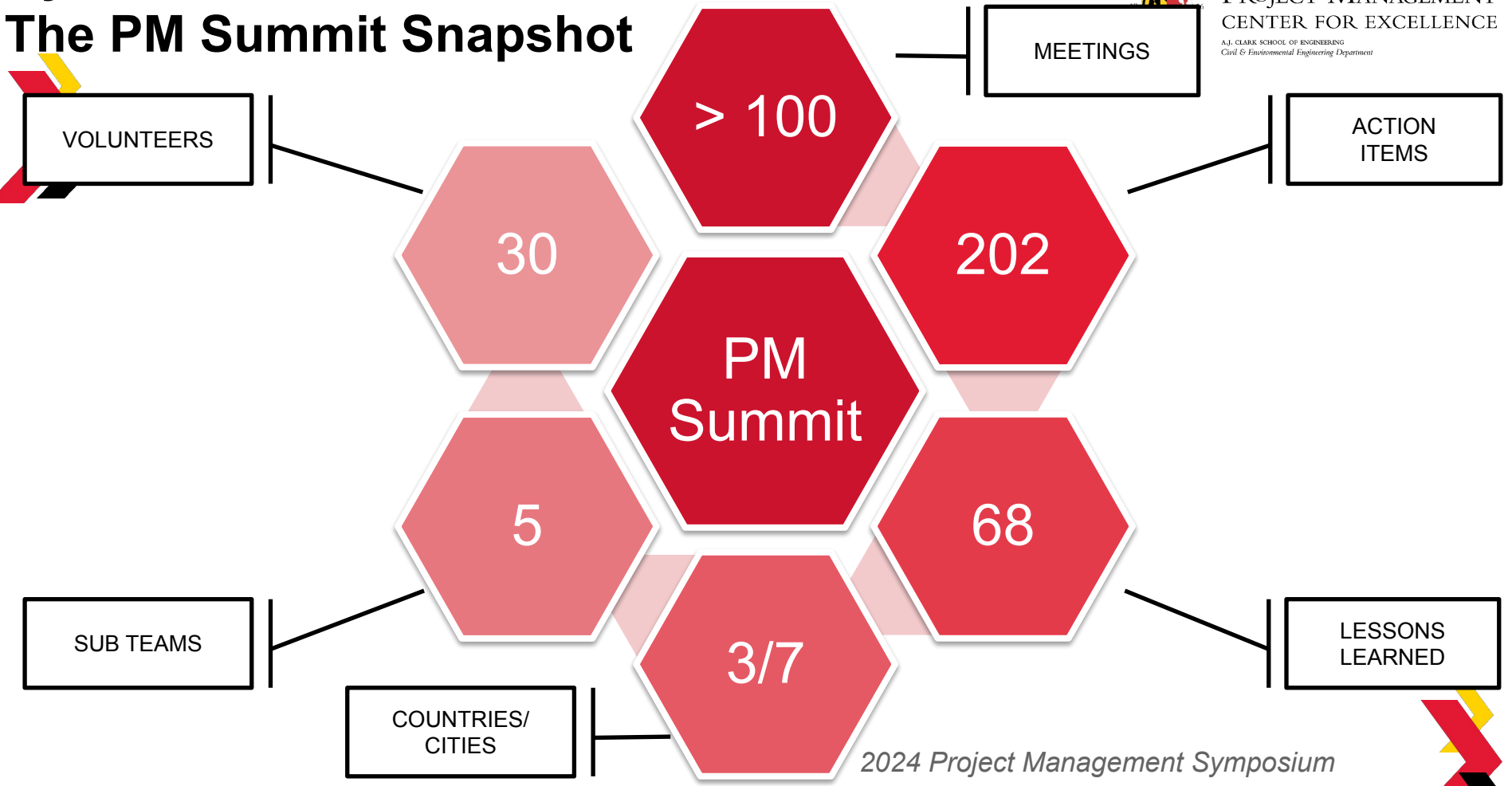

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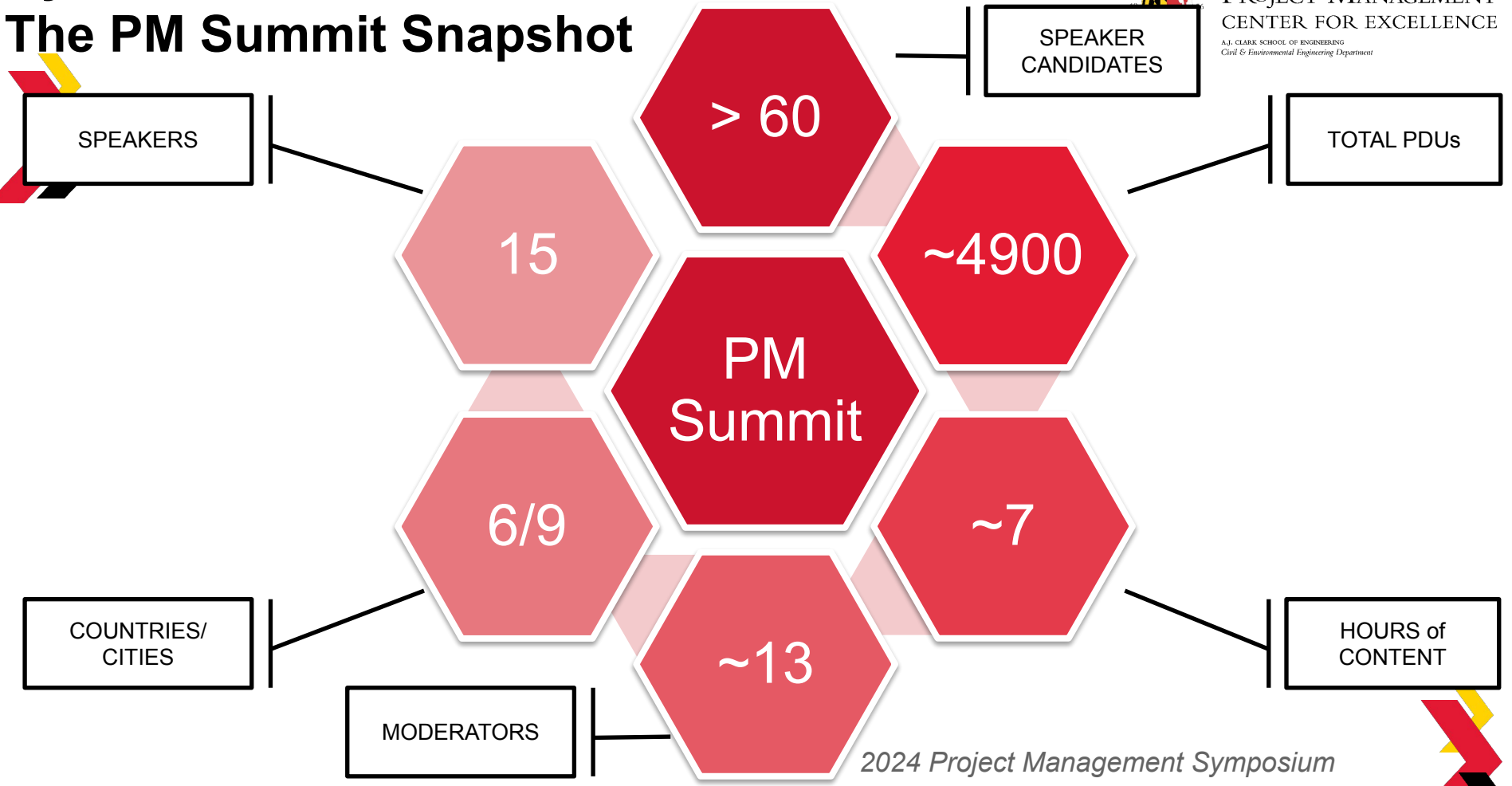

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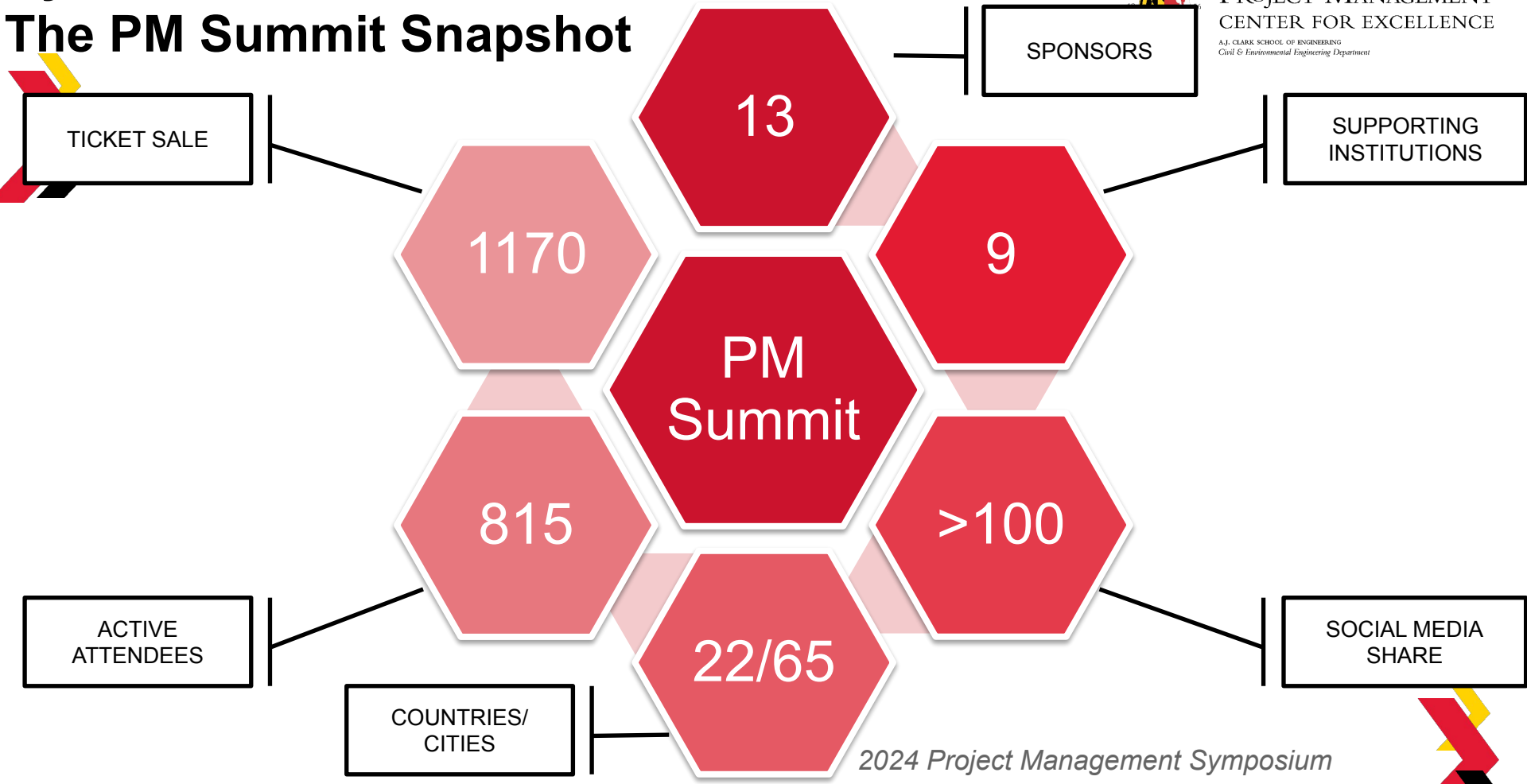

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WHAT DID WE ACHIEVE?

Becoming a High Performing Team

Principles of High Performing Team

Satisfaction and Collaboration

Team satisfaction and seamless collaboration emerge from met expectations and resolved conflicts, **enhancing engagement and productivity**.

Trust

It's the core element that supports all other aspects of team dynamics, allowing for **open communication, vulnerability**, and the **belief** in each other's abilities and intentions.

Sustainability

A culture of trust helps teams to adapt to changes and overcome challenges, ensuring **long-term effectiveness and success**.

Expectations Met & Conflict Resolution

Pivotal mechanism for fostering **alignment** and turning disagreements into **growth opportunities**.

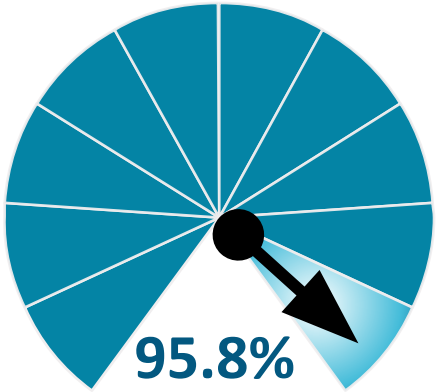
HOW CAN WE KNOW EXPECTATIONS ARE MET?

METRICS

KEY METRICS FOR HIGH PERFORMING TEAMS

1. LOYALTY

Q: Do you plan to continue to be a volunteer at PMI TR after the summit is completed?



LOYAL VOLUNTEER RATE = ~ **96%**

Loyal Volunteer Rate

What is Loyal Volunteer Rate?	**Loyal Volunteer Rate = Number of Repeat Volunteers / Total Volunteers**	
	*High loyal volunteer rate is good – that means you're keeping most of **your team members happy.***	
How to Get Data	From PM Summit Volunteer Engagement Survey	
Calculation	Number of Repeated Volunteers	23
	Total Volunteers (joined to survey)	24
	Total Loyal Volunteer Rate	**96%**

2. SATISFACTION

Q: Can you rate your satisfaction as a volunteer through your PM Summit journey?

VOLUNTEER SATISFACTION SCORE =

Volunteer Satisfaction Score (VSS)

What is Volunteer Satisfaction Score?

Volunteer Ssatisfaction Score **measures how happy your volunteers are.**

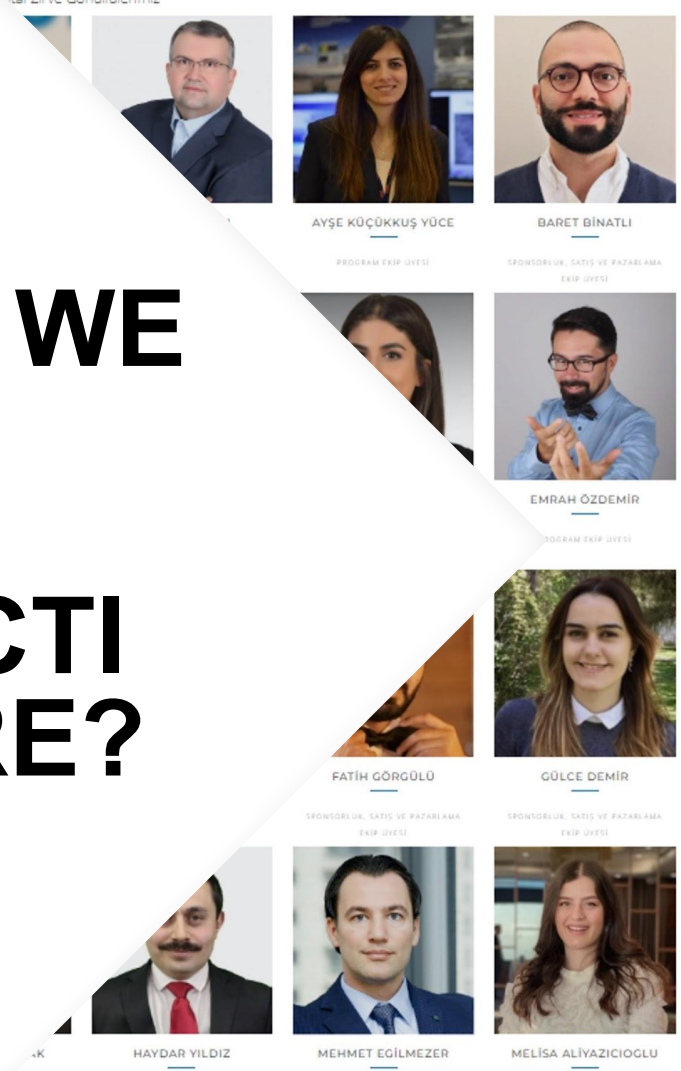
How to Get Data

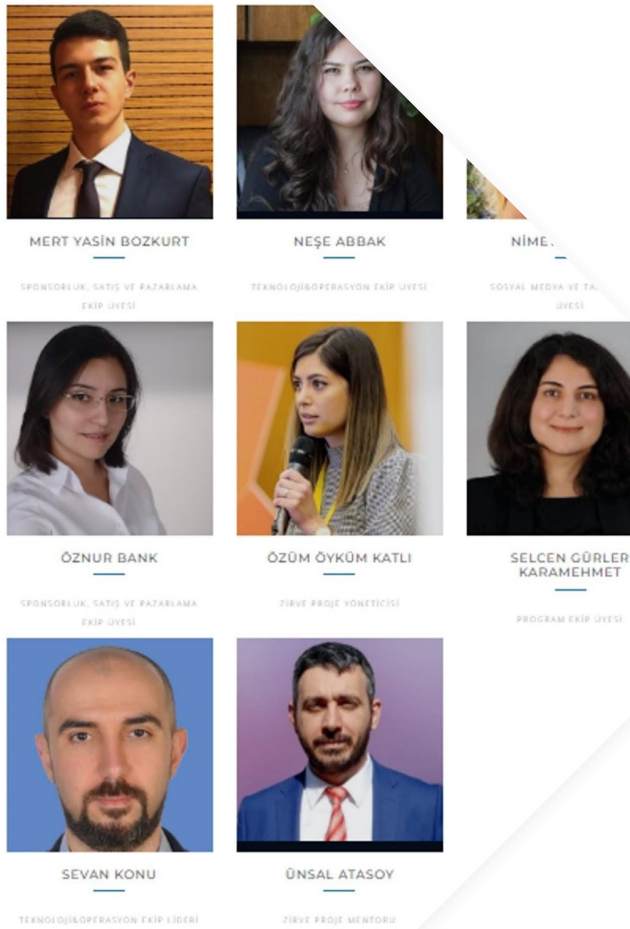
From PM Summit Volunteer Engagement Survey

Calculation

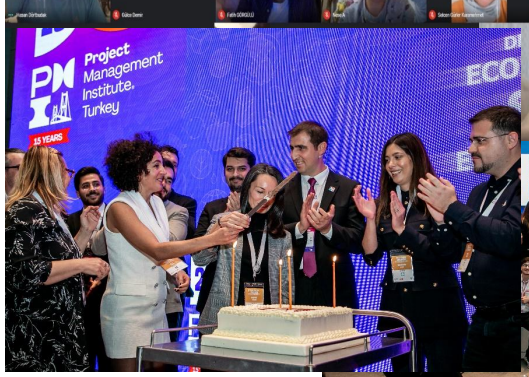
Score	Number of Responses	Total Score
1	0	0
2	0	0
3	0	0
4	5	20
5	19	95
TOTAL	24	115
VSS	**4.79**	

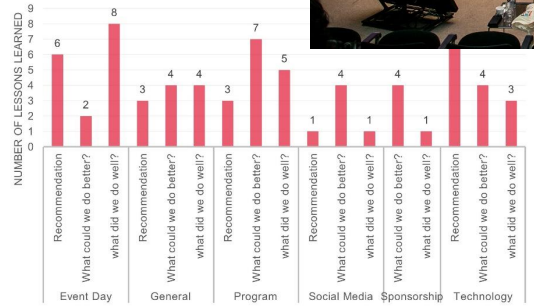
HOW DID WE ACHIEVE HIGH SATISFACTION SCORE?





Enhancing Volunteer Team Performance





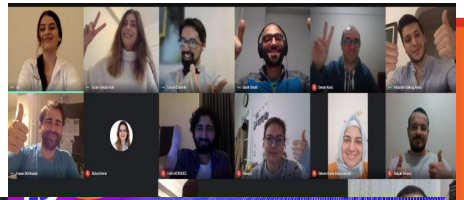
1. Establish Clear Team Norms

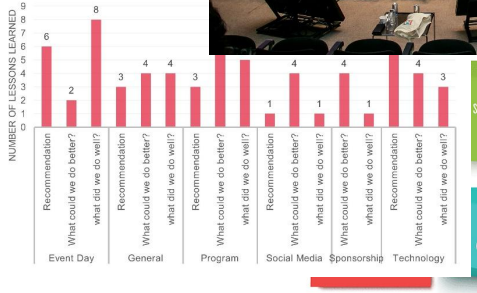
- Robust ground rules & norms for effective communication, conflict resolution, and decision-making. Define roles, responsibilities, and communication protocols.
- ***Practical Project Management (PM) Tools Used:*** *Ground Rules One Pager, RACI Matrix based on functions, Kanban Board, Gantt Chart, and Conflict Management Matrix*

2. Ongoing Engagement

- Through regular, structured check-ins, the team maintained a continuous feedback loop that not only affirmed their progress but also identified areas in need of development.
- ***Practical PM Tools Used:*** *Check-in Meetings, Capability & Capacity Discussions, Regular Lessons Learned & Brainstorming Sessions,*

Enhancing Volunteer Team Performance





3. Reflective Practices

- Reflect on past projects to celebrate successes and learn from challenges.
- ***Practical PM Tools Used:*** *A Retrospective Board for successes, challenges, and learnings. Personalized Thank You Notes. Sharing success stories and case studies internally (and externally (on social media or organization websites). Virtual Team Gatherings to Celebrate Together.*

4. Invest Developing Team Skills

- Targeted leadership development trainings
- ***Practical PM Tools Used:*** *Hosting Live Training Sessions, Workshops, or Guest speaker events. Feedback & Survey Tools such as Google Forms to understand the learning needs of volunteers, and make improvements.*

5. Recognition and Appreciation

Acknowledge contributions to boost morale and value each volunteer.

Practical PM Tools Used: *To recognize and validate the skills volunteers gain, digital badges and certificates awarded upon completion of achievement of certain milestones.*

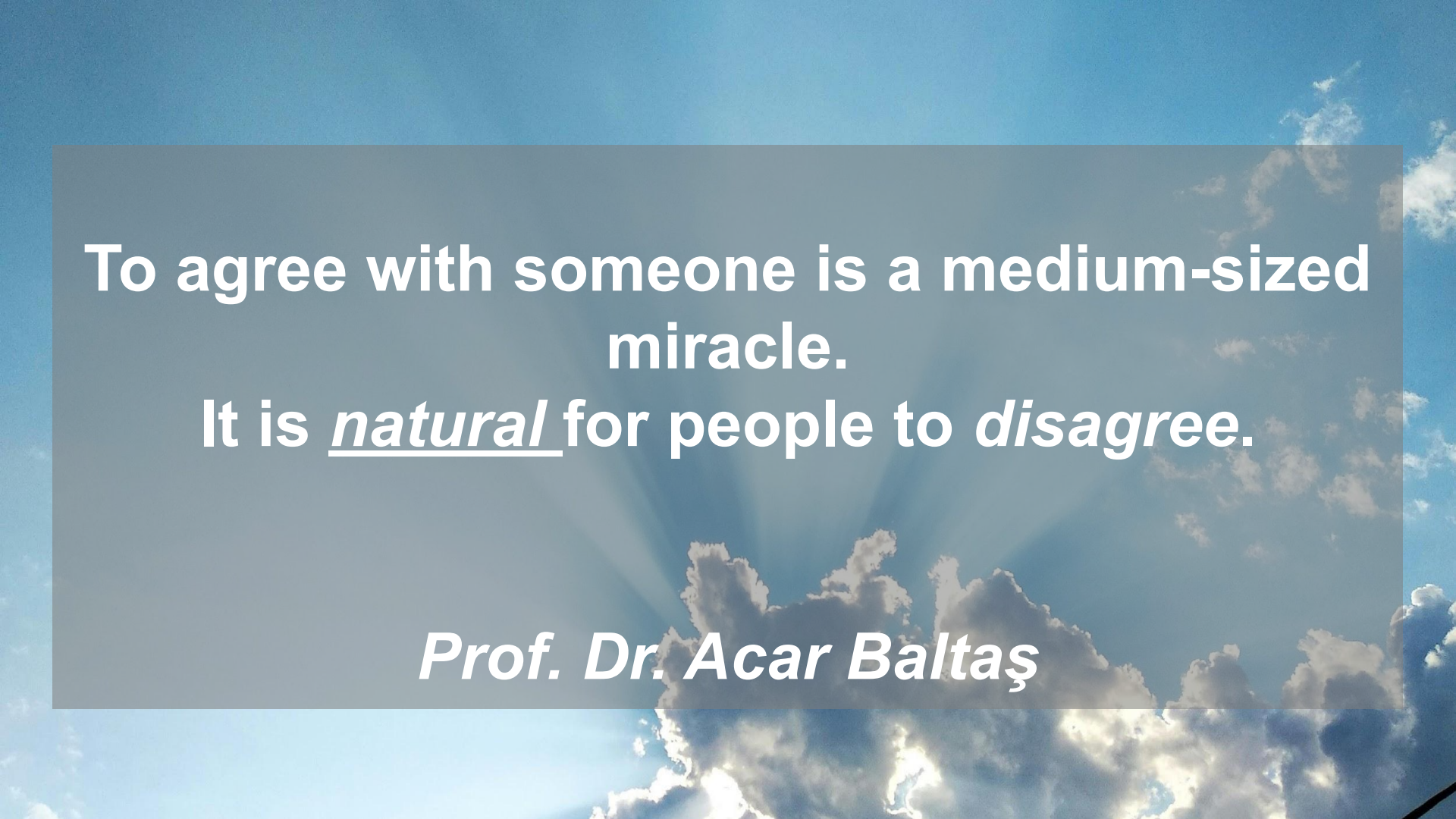
3. CONFLICT

Q: Have summit prep conflicts been effectively resolved?

TOTAL CONFLICT RESOLUTION RATE = **86%**

Conflict Resolution Rate		
What is Conflict Resolution Rate?	**Conflict Resolution Rate = Number of Solved Conflicts / Total Conflicts in Conflict Log**	
How to Get Data	From PM Summit Conflict Log	
Calculation	Number of Solved Conflicts	13
	Total Conflicts in Conflict Log	15
	Total Conflict Resolution Rate	**86%**

Conflicts

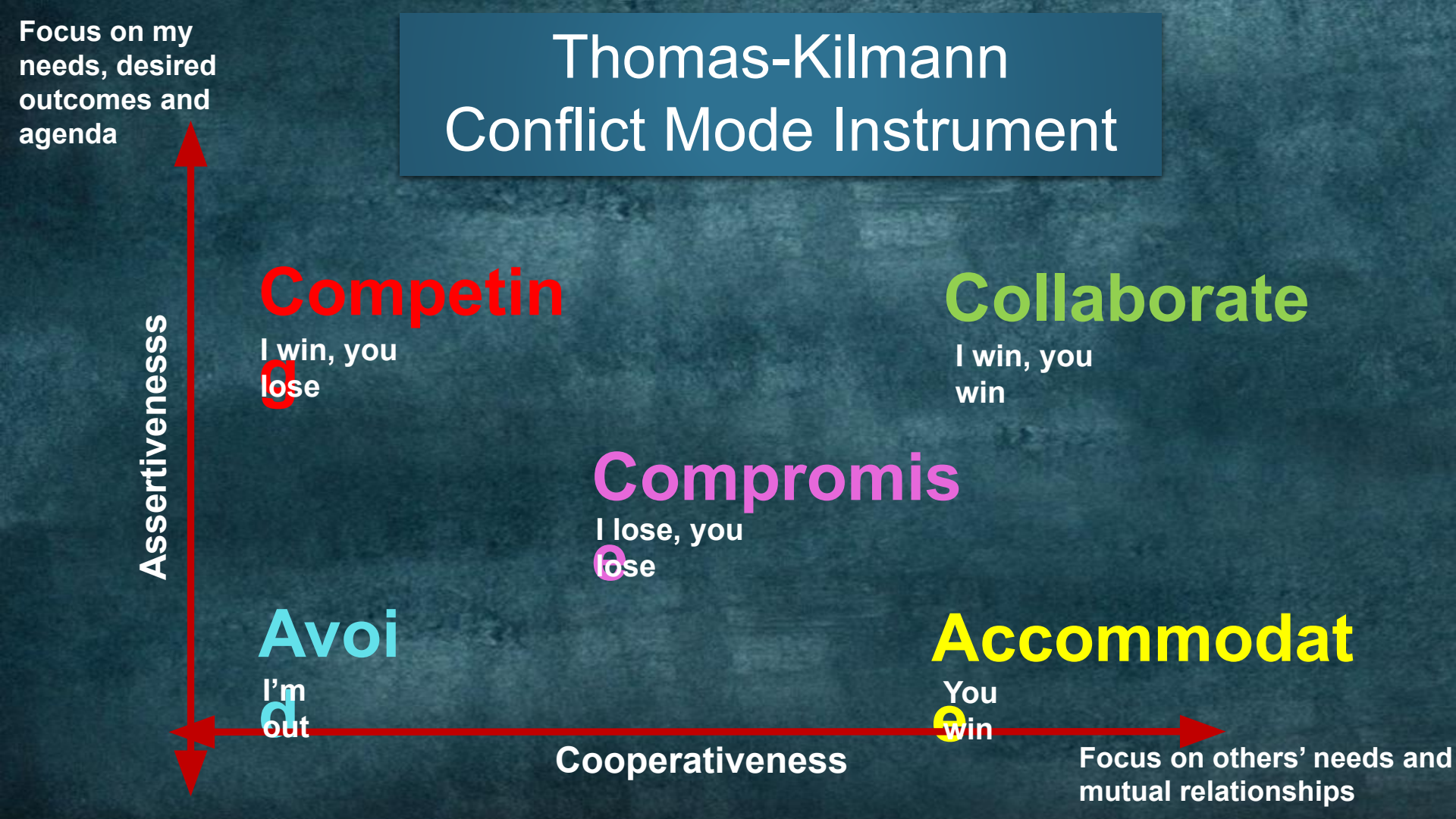

To agree with someone is a medium-sized miracle.
It is natural for people to disagree.
Prof. Dr. Acar Baltaş

The will to manage the conflict is the key.

CONSTRUCTIVE CONFLICT

TRUST

Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument

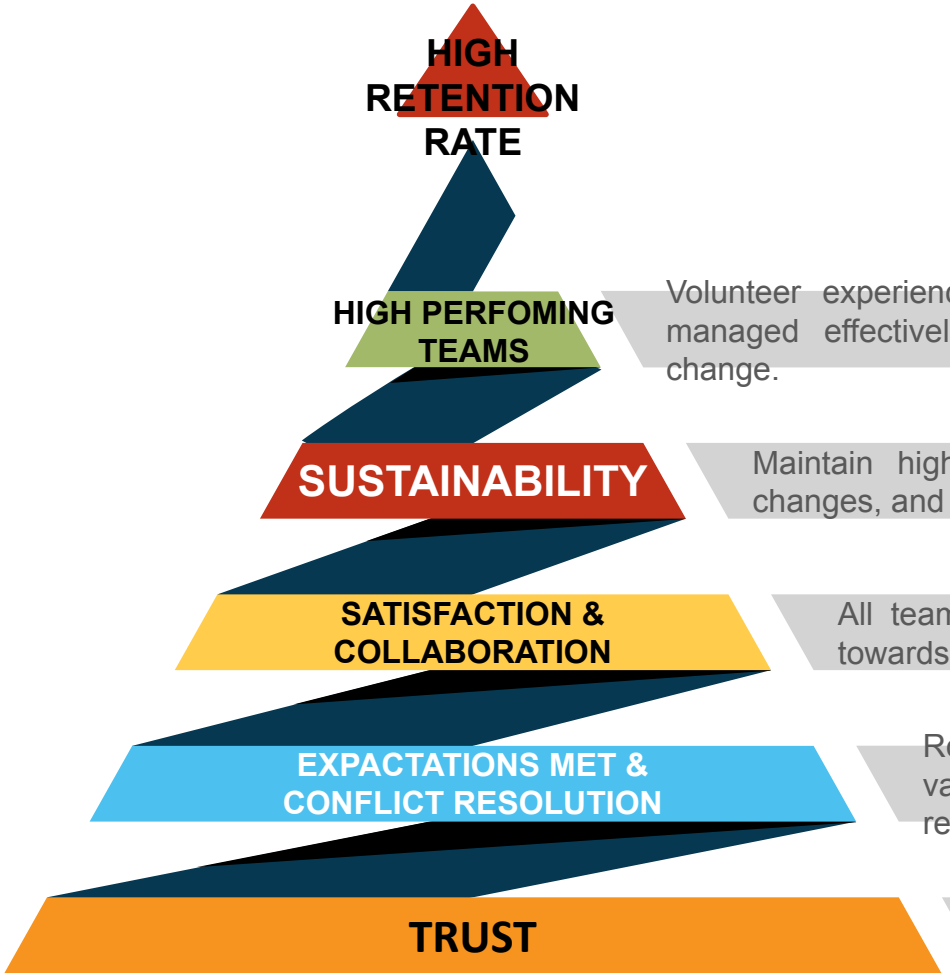


Hard to capture the data!

The next best thing is to create a conflict log.

What happened?	Who involved?*	Which method?	Did it work?	Time when the conflict fully resolved
The conflict	Instead of people, recommended to use roles, department names.	One of the Thomas-Kilmann Method	Yes/No	Time (Regularly check/update)

Principles of High Performing Team



Volunteer experience remains positive, challenges are managed effectively, and the environment adapts to change.

Maintain high performance over time, adapt to changes, and continue to thrive.

All team members are aligned and working towards common goals.

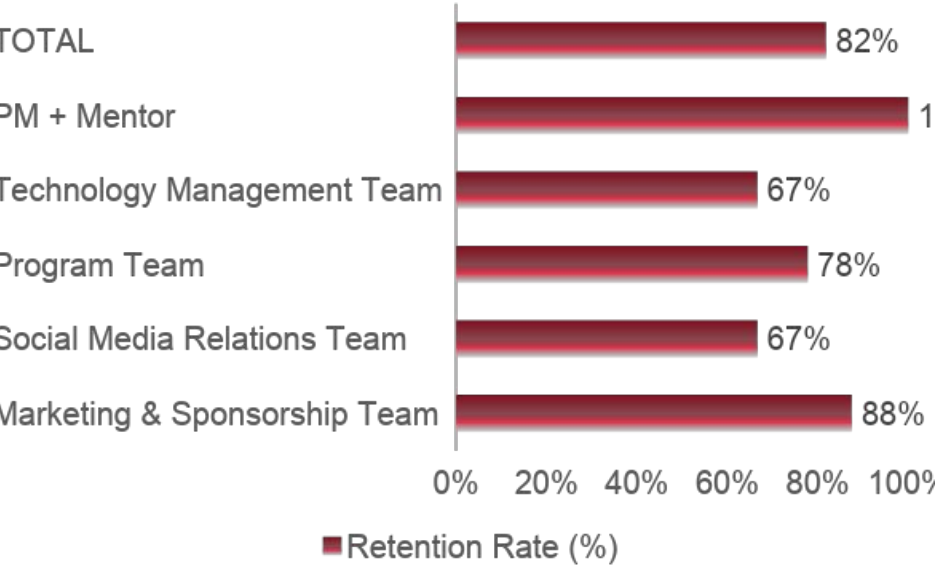
Roles are clear, contributions are valued, and conflicts are constructively resolved.

The core element that supports all other aspects of team dynamics.

Katli – Ozdemir Engagement Model

High retention rates are both a sign of and a contributor to the success of the model, indicative of a well-functioning volunteer team.

4. RETENTION



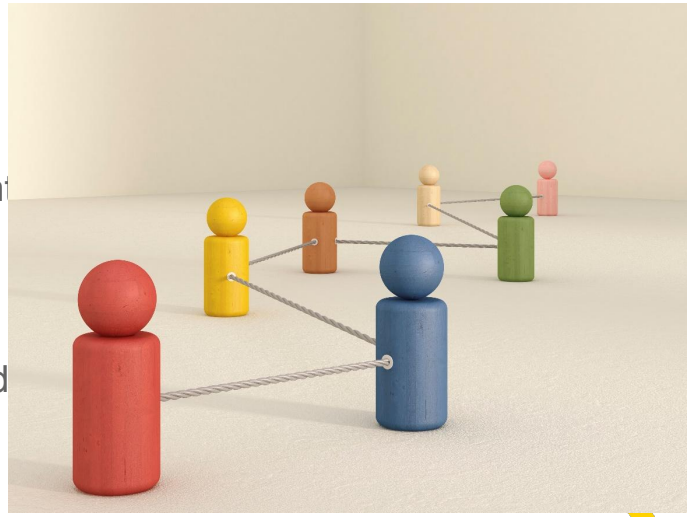
VOLUNTEER RETENTION RATE =

Volunteer **Retention** Rate (VRR)

What is Retention Rate?	VRR= (Volunteers at the End of the Period - New Volunteers Acquired in the Period) / Volunteers at the Start of the Period
How to Get Data	Choose a specific period of time – one year, one month, all time, etc. – and be consistent in entering the metrics from that time for accuracy.
Calculation	Volunteers at the Start of the Period: 33
	Volunteers at the End of the Period: 30
	New Volunteers Acquired in the Period: 3
	Total Volunteer Retention Rate: 82%

KEY FINDINGS

- Volunteers' **economic and social impact** is profound and indispensable.
- Overcoming management challenges guided by **data-driven** insight **catalyzes** our **collective** potential.
- Our team's excellence is rooted in **trust**, built upon **clear goals** and **collaborative synergy**, driving us towards **sustainable success.**
- **Willingness to manage conflict** is key as it preserves team **unity and effectiveness.**



Volunteers become part of an organization to create a difference. Allow them to have an impact, let them **GLOW, GROW,** and **ENJOY!**

THANK YOU.

ÖZÜM ÖYKÜM KATLI, MSc

Emrah Özdemir

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