

Donor retention: How to encourage your blood donors to return

Why is donor retention important?

Retaining regular blood donors is an important aspect of a successful recruitment program as it promotes sustainability of the blood supply.

Studies consistently show that regular donors have lower rates of transfusion transmissible infections (TTIs), and these donors also have additional economic benefits in testing regimes and marketing efforts, as compared to first-time donors [1].



What can you do to encourage donors to return?

1. **Create the right experience:** design great experiences for the donor (as your "customer") and provide memorable customer service. Ensure the experience meets the donor's expectations, and is warm - yet safe and professional. Building trust is important.
2. **Respect the donor's time.** Try and reduce waiting times as much as possible.
3. **Remind donors** when they are next eligible to donate blood - studies have shown they are more likely to return when reminded. Consider using a donor database to manage this. *Note: this database must ensure the privacy and confidentiality of donor information.*
4. **Send out regular communications** to current donors, such as text messages, or emails. Examples include a pre-donation message to explain the process (can help to reduce anxiety) and a post-donation "thank you" email.
5. Ensure **appropriate donation care is provided**, i.e. advice on adequate hydration pre-donation, applied muscle tension during donation, and donor refreshments and activities to avoid after donation. This will reduce the likelihood of donor adverse events.
6. **Display images and stories of the patients** whose lives have been saved by blood donation in the blood collection centre or at mobile collection events. This provides a powerful emotional appeal for blood donation.
7. Complete online **Blood Donation Training** (IFRC Learning Platform login required) – ask staff and volunteers to do the same. This online training is free and provides good foundational knowledge.
8. Conduct regular **training in donor retention strategies** for your blood collection staff, including what they can say to the donor before, during and after the blood donation.
9. **Get feedback on the donors experience** - as you can't improve what you can't measure! Do this via a simple survey, or ask groups of donors to tell you what they did or didn't like about their experience. Learn from this.
10. If applicable, implement strategies to **target altruistic family and replacement donors** that have screened negative for transfusion transmissible infections (TTIs) on their blood donation, to invite them to return as regular voluntary blood donors. Contact GAP for more information.

[1] van Dongen A. Easy come, easy go. Retention of blood donors. *Transfus Med.* 2015 Aug;25(4):227-33. doi: 10.1111/tme.12249.

Access the GAP website for more resources, or contact us with any questions you may have.

© 2022 Global Advisory Panel. All Rights Reserved.



Global Advisory Panel

on Corporate Governance and Risk Management of Blood Services in Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

