

VSys Voices:
Beth Steinhorn's Advice how
to Increase Impact by Raising
Your Volunteer Quotient



Today's Presenter



Beth Steinhorn is a nationally recognized leader and innovator in volunteer engagement.

Beth co-authored the book *Boomer Volunteer Engagement: Facilitator's Tool Kit*, served as editor for the book *Boomer Volunteer Engagement: Collaborate Today, Thrive Tomorrow* and is the co-editor of *Transforming Disruption to Impact: Rethinking Volunteer Engagement for a Rapidly Changing World* which recently was published. She is also a contributing author to VolunteerMatch's *Volunteer Engagement 2.0*.

Additionally Beth is a certified Service Enterprise trainer.

Learn more at <https://vqstrategies.com/>
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Increase Impact by Raising Your Volunteer Quotient

VSys One

October 2025





Beth Steinhorn, President



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Volunteer Engagement as a Strategy



Benefits of Strategic Volunteer Engagement

When organizations engage volunteers and do it well...

- All organizational capacities are **significantly and markedly stronger**
- They are significantly better led and managed.
- They are significantly more **adaptable, sustainable and capable of going to scale.**
- They are equally as effective as their peers without volunteers, but at **almost half the median budget.**



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Assessment

Quality
Improvement

Casemaking

Fund
Development

Training

Planning

Other?



What's Your VQ? Assess your Volunteer Quotient

Volunteer Quotient, or VQ, is an organization's ability to leverage volunteer talent to achieve smarter impact. Every organization already has a VQ. Answer these questions, calculate your VQ, and see where you can boost your practice to have even smarter impact.

Strategic Volunteer Roles

Volunteer roles are designed to address organizational needs and attract today's volunteers.

	ALMOST ALWAYS (3)	SOMEWHAT (2)	NOT MUCH (1)	I DON'T KNOW (0)
• We regularly assess our organization's needs to identify opportunities to engage volunteers.	☐	☐	☐	☐
• We are willing to discontinue roles that no longer align with our priorities.	☐	☐	☐	☐
• We engage volunteers in roles that leverage their skills.	☐	☐	☐	☐
• We offer flexible schedules and/or virtual volunteer opportunities.	☐	☐	☐	☐
• We have written position/project descriptions for current and future volunteer opportunities.	☐	☐	☐	☐
To calculate your VQ:				
1. Write the number of checked boxes in each column.	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Multiply each number from step 1 by the value at the top of the column (3, 2, 1, or 0).	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Add the values from step 2. (Highest possible score is 15.)			☐	

This is your VQ for Creating Strategic Volunteer Roles.

What's Your VQ?

VQ = Volunteer Quotient

Volunteer Quotient is an organization's ability to leverage volunteer talent to increase its impact – in other words, its ability to achieve *smarter impact*.

VQ Practices



1. Creating Strategic Volunteer Roles

2. Cultivating Volunteers

3. Screening and Placement

4. Onboarding and Training

5. Support and Accountability

6. Evaluation, Recognition, and Acknowledgment

7. Policies, Infrastructure, and Technology

8. Organizational Commitment to Volunteer Engagement

VQ Practices

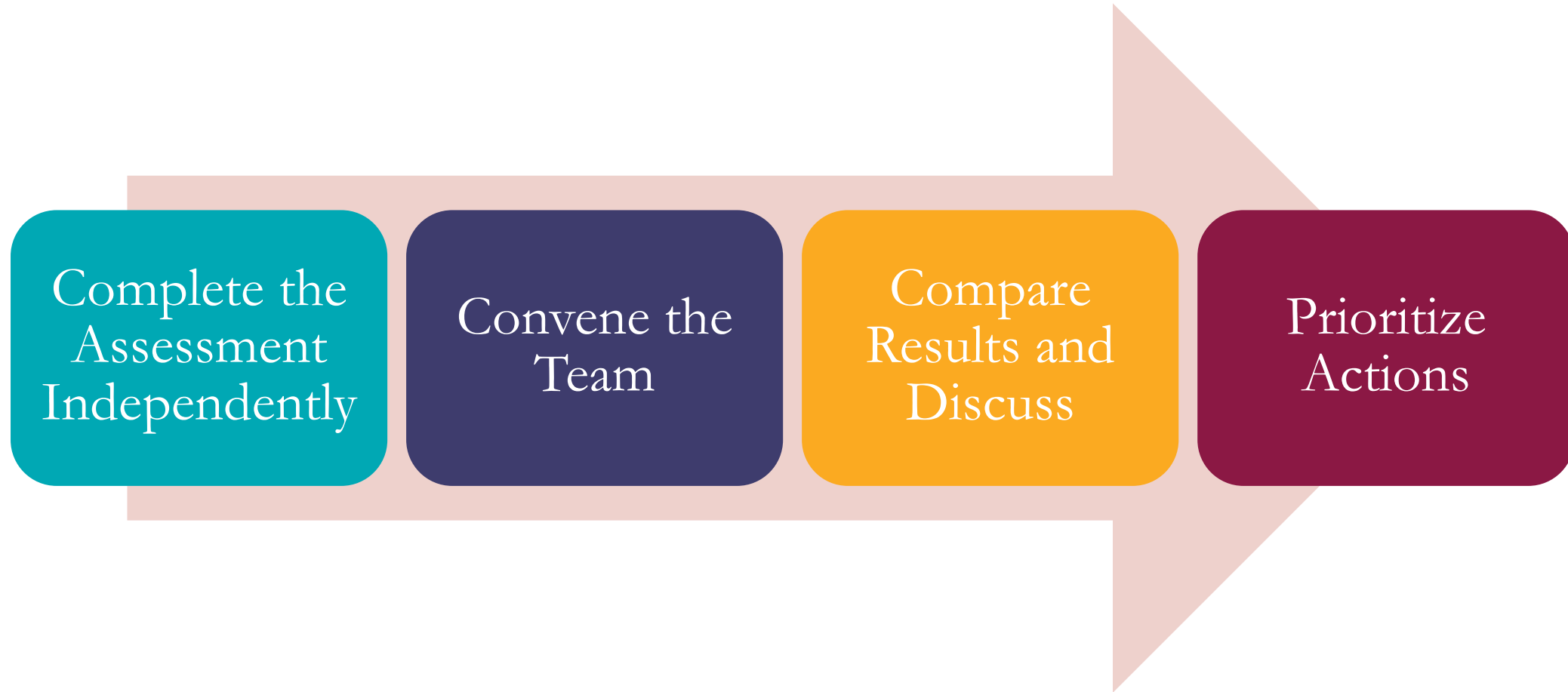
A scenic landscape featuring a vibrant green field in the foreground, a narrow dirt path leading into the distance, and a range of misty, forested mountains in the background. The sky is overcast, and the overall atmosphere is serene and natural.

Informed by Research

Demonstrated by
Experience

Replicable

Assessment



Creating Strategic Volunteer Roles

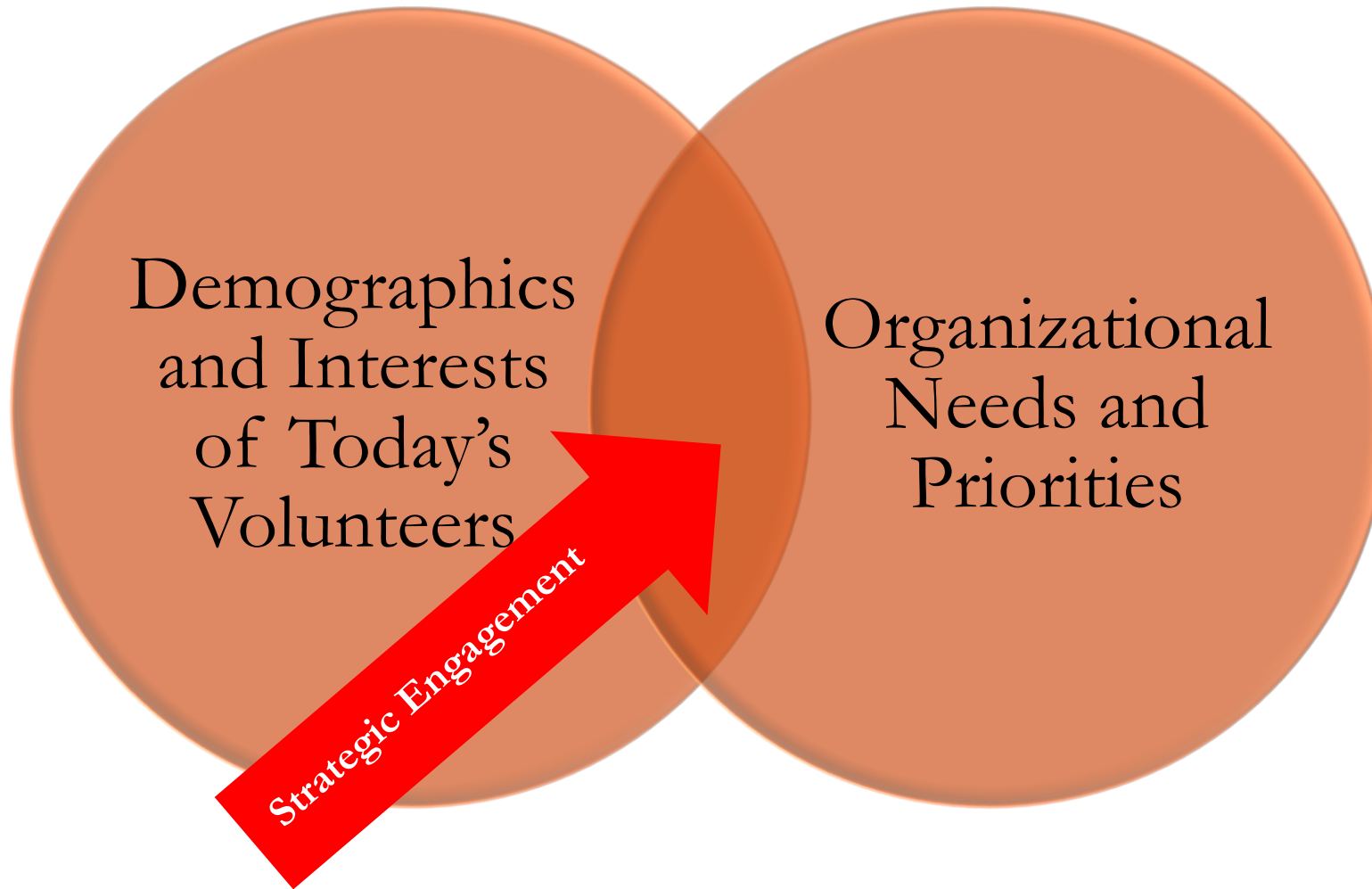


What's Your VQ?

Creating Strategic Volunteer Roles

VQ Volunteer Strategies © 2018	Almost Always (3)	Some-times (2)	Not Yet (1)	I Don't Know (0)
We regularly assess our organization's needs to identify opportunities to engage volunteers.				
We are willing to discontinue roles that no longer align with our priorities.				
We engage volunteers in roles that leverage their skills.				
We offer flexible schedules and/or virtual volunteer opportunities.				
We have written position/project descriptions for current and future volunteer opportunities.				

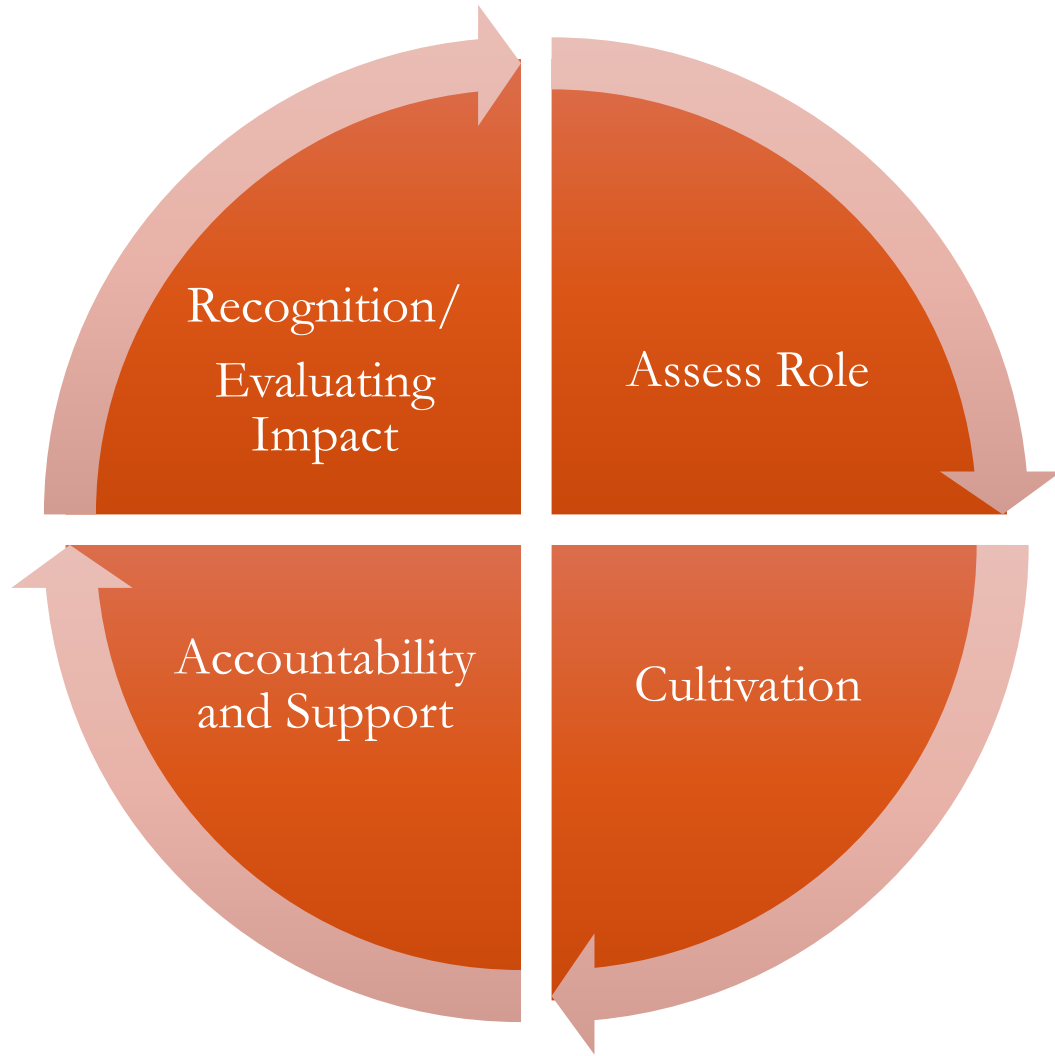
Developing Roles



Assessing Needs



Position Descriptions



Position Descriptions



Cultivating Volunteers

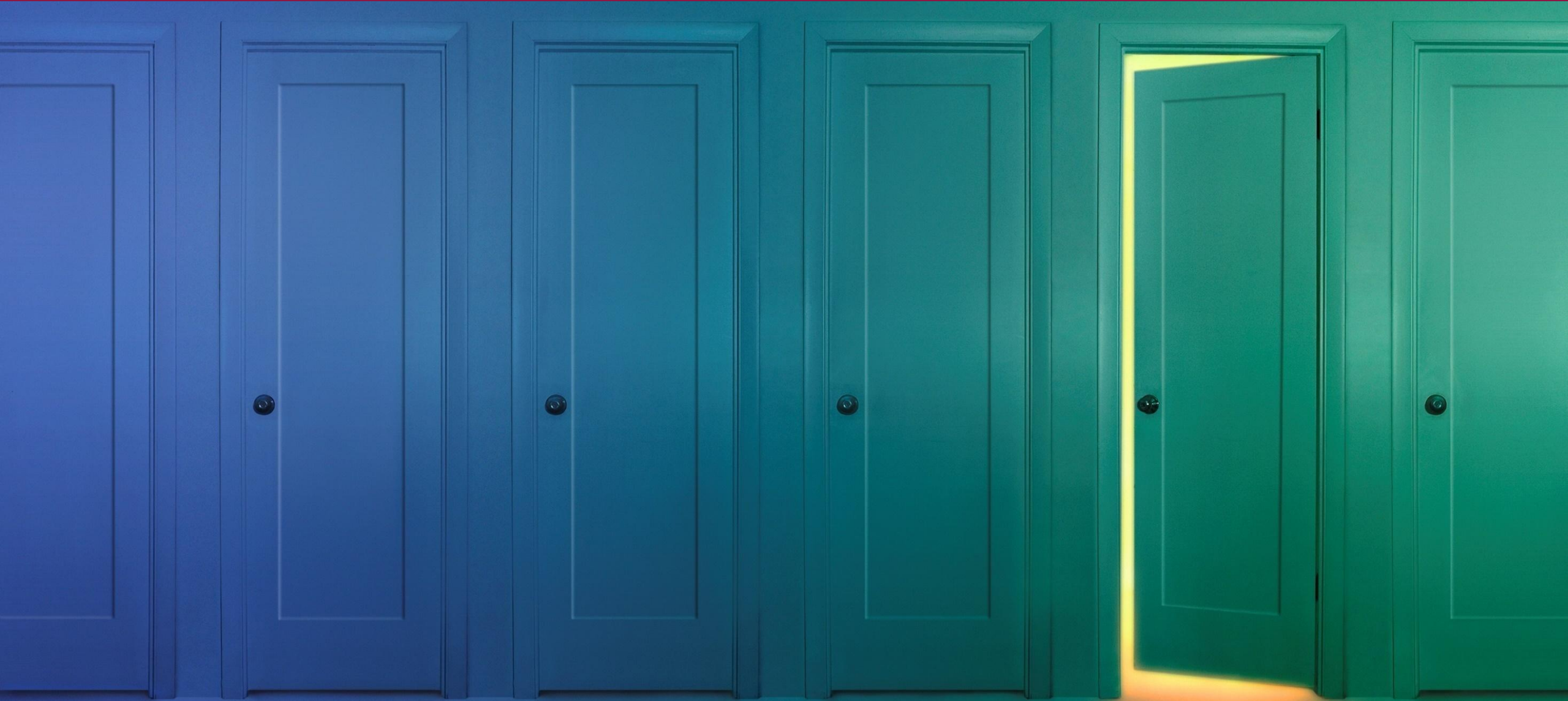


What's Your VQ?

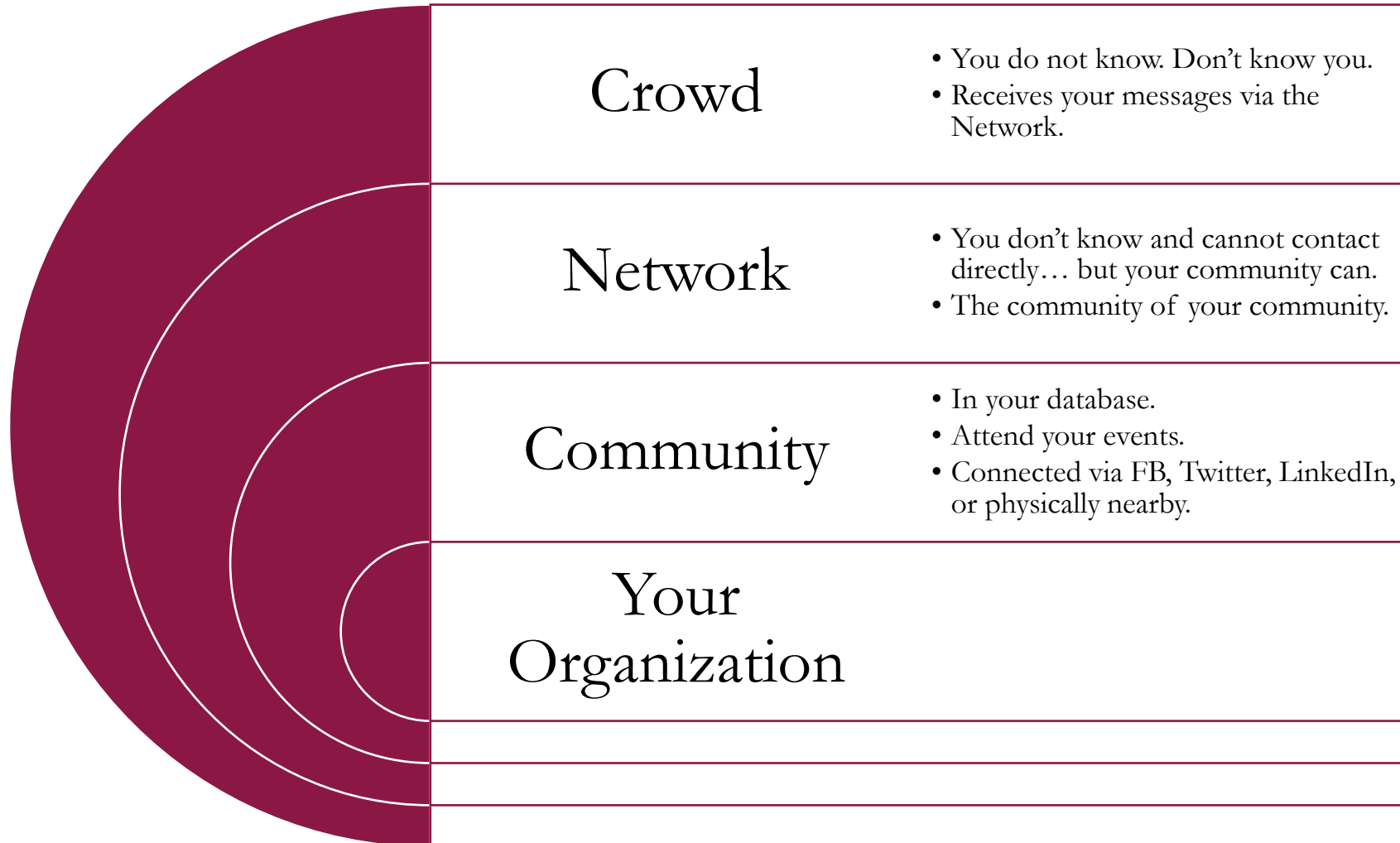
Cultivating Volunteers

VQ Volunteer Strategies © 2018	Almost Always (3)	Some-times (2)	Not Yet (1)	I Don't Know (0)
We have a volunteer cultivation plan and it is reviewed regularly.				
People interested in volunteering with us can easily find out how to apply to become a volunteer.				
Staff and volunteers are trained and supported to personally recruit volunteers to fill our needs.				
We effectively leverage technology, partnerships, and professional networks to recruit volunteers.				
We support and encourage individuals to take on new roles to stay connected with us over the years.				

Getting volunteers TO your doors...



Circles of Influence



Getting volunteers **THROUGH** your doors...



“Attuning” Questions

Question 1:

On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 meaning “not the least bit ready to volunteer with our organization” and 10 meaning “totally ready to sign up to volunteer with our organization,” how ready are you to volunteer with our organization?

Question 2:

Why didn't you pick a lower number?

Screening and Placement



What's Your VQ?

Interviewing, Screening, and Placement

VQ Volunteer Strategies © 2018	Almost Always (3)	Some-times (2)	Not Yet (1)	I Don't Know (0)
Our volunteer application gathers information on applicants' interests, skills, availability, and contact information.				
We have an effective screening process for each volunteer position, and it is appropriate to the level of skill and risk for each position (e.g., background checks are implemented when appropriate).				
Volunteers are placed into positions only when they are a strong match for the position, and we don't accept those who are not.				

Screening and Placement

Recruitment, Vetting, Placement

- What is your role in each?
- Do you know how decisions are made about placement?



Elements of Screening

- Application
- Eligibility Requirements
- Background and Identity Checks
- Reference Checks
- Interview
- Training Completion/Certification
- Probationary Period



Barriers to Screening

“I don’t have time to interview!”

“We can’t afford to pay for background checks.”

“How can we ask these experts to sit through an interview? That’s insulting!”

“We should accept every offer of assistance!”

What barriers keep your organization from screening?

Onboarding & Training



What's Your VQ?

Training and Professional Development

VQ Volunteer Strategies © 2018	Almost Always (3)	Some-times (2)	Not Yet (1)	I Don't Know (0)
Volunteers receive training specific to their roles.				
Volunteers receive ongoing training for their roles informally as well as through formal continuing education.				
All staff members are trained and regularly coached to work effectively with volunteers.				

Support & Accountability

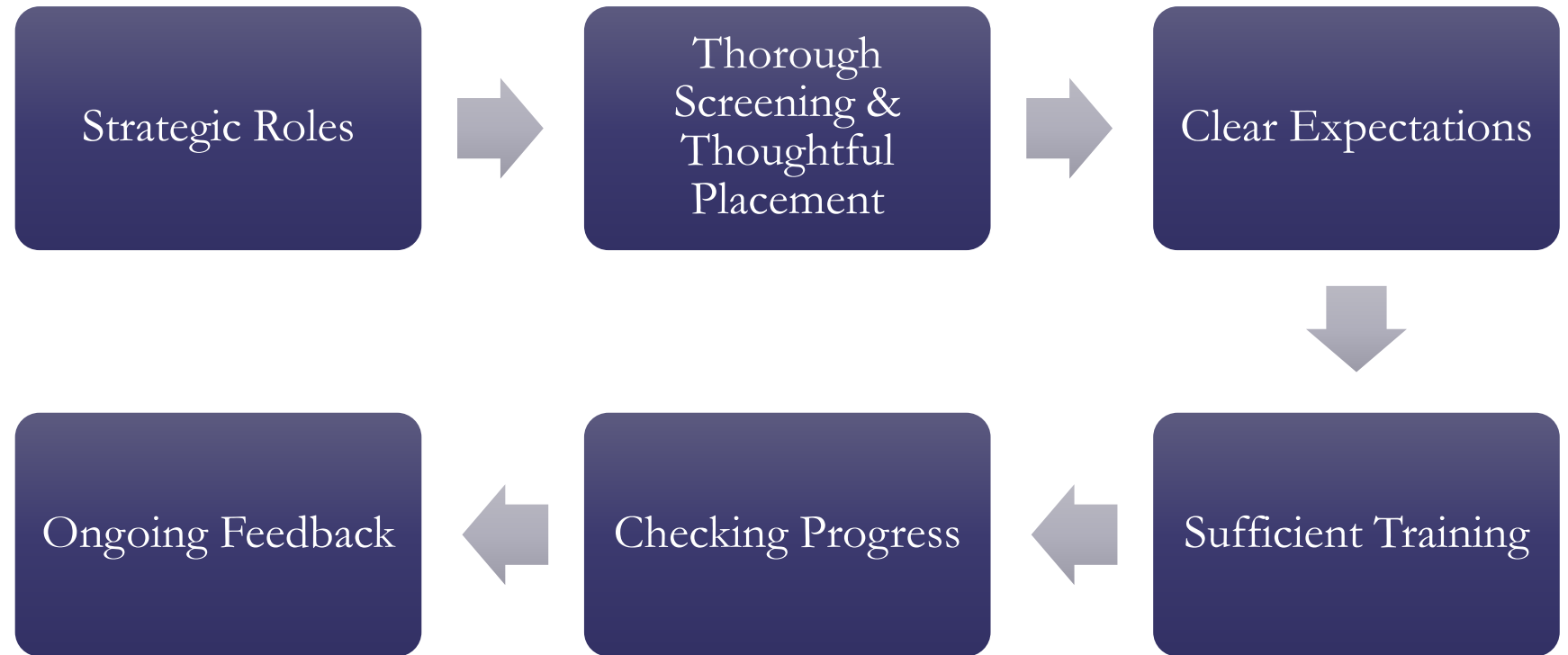


What's Your VQ?

Support and Accountability

VQ Volunteer Strategies © 2018	Almost Always (3)	Some-times (2)	Not Yet (1)	I Don't Know (0)
All volunteers receive an orientation to familiarize them with the people, systems, programs, and policies relevant to their work with our organization.				
Volunteers know whom to contact when they have questions or need assistance.				
At the start of all collaborative projects, staff and volunteers agree on timeline and outcomes as well as how they will track progress and communicate with each other.				
Adequate budget, space, and equipment are allocated for volunteers to be successful in their roles.				

Setting Yourself Up For Success



Evaluation and Recognition



What's Your VQ?

Evaluation, Recognition and Acknowledgment

VQ Volunteer Strategies © 2018	Almost Always (3)	Some-times (2)	Not Yet (1)	I Don't Know (0)
Staff and volunteer leaders regularly provide feedback to volunteers on performance.				
We welcome, encourage, and give consideration to suggestions and feedback from volunteers.				
We regularly track and measure the impact of volunteer involvement.				
We acknowledge volunteer contributions and impact in ways that are meaningful to volunteers.				
Volunteer impact is routinely shared with leadership, partners, funders, volunteers, and the community.				

Volunteer Hours

Only communicates
quantity.
Not efficiency or
impact.



Impact Measurement

Accountability

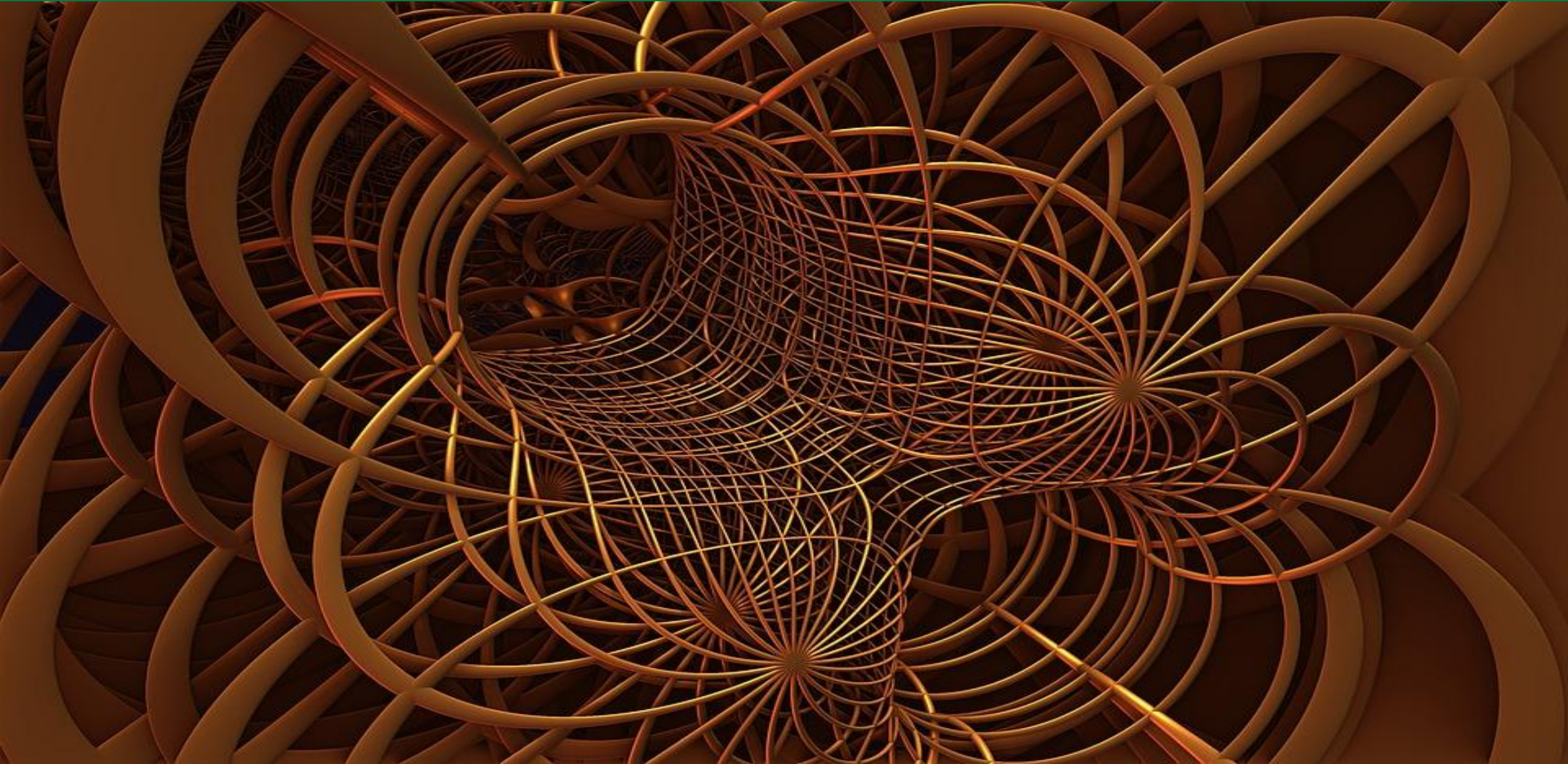
Evaluation

Motivation

Case-making



Policies, Infrastructure, and Technology



What's Your VQ?

Policies, Infrastructure, and Technology

VQ Volunteer Strategies © 2018	Almost Always (3)	Some-times (2)	Not Yet (1)	I Don't Know (0)
We have comprehensive volunteer engagement policies and we review them regularly.				
Volunteer engagement is included in our organization's risk management planning.				
Technology is used to make volunteer cultivation, tracking, scheduling, and training easy and efficient.				

Organizational Commitment



What's Your VQ?

Organizational Commitment

VQ Volunteer Strategies © 2018	Almost Always (3)	Some-times (2)	Not Yet (1)	I Don't Know (0)
Volunteer engagement is explicitly included in our strategic plan				
We have a strategic plan for volunteer engagement.				
Our senior leadership actively talks about volunteer engagement when discussing organizational goals and strategy.				
Volunteer engagement professionals (coordinators, managers, directors) are represented on the senior management team and in cross-divisional meetings.				
Volunteer engagement is incorporated into staff position descriptions at all levels of the organization.				

Case Study: City of Boulder



Catastrophe
identified
gaps in
engagement

Commitment
to leverage
residents as
volunteers

Develop a
strategy and
resources to
support it

Case Study: City of Boulder



Getting the Right People on Board

- Dedicated Leader
- Volunteer Cooperative
- Guiding Coalition

Organizing and Prioritizing the Work

- Developing at Strategic Plan
- Seeking Service Enterprise Certification
- Infrastructure improvements

Embracing a Learning Culture

- Training for staff
- Spirit of innovation

Sustaining the Momentum

- Position Descriptions
- Work Plans
- Sharing Successes



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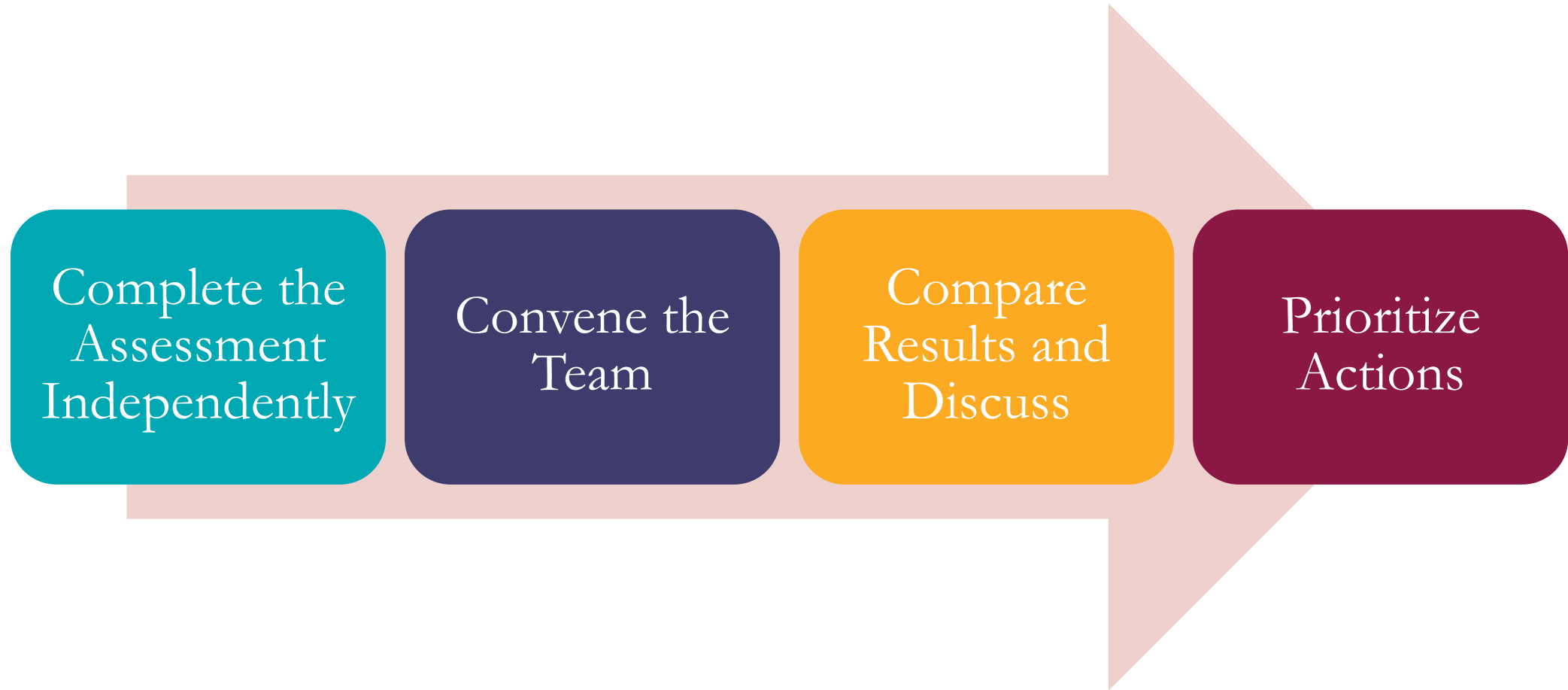
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Assessment



Discussion



Beth Steinhorn, President



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Thank you.

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