

Flake Rate: The rule of halves

An important factor in volunteer recruitment is understanding the “flake rate.” In short, 50% of the people recruited for any event, phone bank, or canvass, will not show up as promised. Anticipating the 50% flake rate, and working to minimize its impact, is critical in experiencing success in volunteer recruitment efforts.

Managing the flake rate

- Don't lie to yourself. The flake rate is real. Plan accordingly.
- If you need a specific number of people, recruit twice as many people as you need.
- Maybe means NO. Counting maybes as yes will inflate your numbers.

Reducing the flake rate

- Ask people to bring a friend. The ones who succeed will balance out the flake factor.
- Assign volunteers to bring food, napkins, pencils, whatever you may need. This will make them feel more accountability to attend.
- Have a “draw.” Invite someone of note (like a local elected official) to give opening remarks and thank volunteers if possible.
- Reminder Calls should be made 24 hours in advance as well as reminder e-mails.

Reducing the future flake rate.

- Register people as they arrive. Call anyone who did not show, but also did not cancel. Try to sign them up for something else. The fact that you demonstrate that you know they didn't show will make them treat you more seriously in the future.