

6. MANAGING VOLUNTEERS

6.1 Introduction

Volunteers are an integral and essential part of community clubs and organisations. Volunteers need to be valued, managed and included as part of the organisation. Volunteers who feel they have made a worthwhile contribution, have been appropriately rewarded and recognised, and feel respected are more likely to contribute to that organisation again. This section will highlight the role of effective leadership and motivation in good volunteer management practice.

6.1.1 Recruiting Volunteers

Recruitment is the process of attracting new volunteers to your organisation. Clearly, people need to be asked to volunteer if an organisation is going to be successful in recruiting volunteers. The recruitment process should provide potential volunteers with:

- a realistic preview of what a job entails;
- information about the size and nature of the task ahead of them before deciding to commit;
- skills and experience necessary for the tasks;
- the benefits for the volunteers rather than the needs of the organisation; and
- orientation to the club which may include its culture, history, aims, members and decision making processes.

Orientation Program Checklist

- Provide an orientation guidebook or kit.
- Provide copies of current newsletter, annual report and recent marketing / promotional material.
- Provide a copy of the constitution.
- Enter the name, address and contact details of each volunteer into a data base.
- Gather and file copies of qualifications and accreditation certificates from each volunteer.
- Outline the roles and responsibilities of key volunteers and staff.
- Introduce the organisation's culture, history, aims, funding, members and decision making processes.
- Introduce key volunteers and/or staff.
- Detail the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of the volunteer in their new position.
- Familiarise volunteers with facilities, equipment and resources.
- Explain and walk through emergency and evacuation procedures.
- Familiarise volunteers with the organisations day-to-day operations.

6.1.2 Recognising and Rewarding Volunteers

Recognising and rewarding volunteers is a key component in the effective management of human resources and is vital in the retention of club volunteers.

There are some key considerations and approaches to recognising and rewarding volunteers. In terms of equity, it is important to keep records and to know why volunteers are being recognised (i.e. length of service) or rewarded (i.e. going beyond the call of duty).

Recognition stems from genuinely valuing your volunteers and their efforts within your club. The list below is not comprehensive but provides a number of widely used recognition and reward ideas.

Recognising and Rewarding Volunteers	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smiling, saying hello and thank you. • Sending a welcome letter when volunteers are first recruited. • Including volunteers on organisational charts. • Offering personal praise to the volunteer while on the job. • Writing letters and postcards of thanks. • Writing letters of reference and including details of service. • Giving identification pins, badges, shirts or caps. • Acknowledging volunteers in club newsletter. • Presenting volunteer awards at the Annual General Meeting. • Giving complimentary tickets to special events and functions. • Sending get well, birthday and Christmas cards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arranging discounts at stores or restaurants. • Awarding life memberships. • Reimbursing out-of-pocket expenses. • Holding social events in honour of volunteers. • Acknowledging efforts during committee meetings. • Farewelling people when they move away from the area. • Providing meal and petrol vouchers. • Arranging for free or discounted use of facilities. • Listening to volunteer's ideas. • Funding training courses, conferences and seminars. • Presenting awards for 1,3,5,10,15 and more years of service.

6.1.3 Retaining Volunteers

Volunteer retention is an essential component of the human resource management approach to managing volunteers. Retention is about putting into place a series of processes and procedures that foster a sense of organisational commitment among volunteers.

Identifying and implementing training and development programs develops the skills and confidence levels of volunteers. To assist this process clubs may consider developing:

- A Volunteer Co-ordinator position.
- Performance appraisals for volunteers.
- Keeping records to ensure that volunteers are recognised and rewarded for their effort.

For further information on Volunteer Management and other relevant club development information go to www.sportslink.org.au

The Sportslink website contains an on-line Community Club Resource Manual that can assist with all your club development issues.