Recruiting Volunteers

Recruitment is the process of attracting new volunteers to an organisation.

# Tips

* **Understand what motivates people** to volunteer in your club or sport and what benefits they gain from it.
* **Don’t rely on advertising or publicity** – relatively few volunteers are recruited that way.
* **Ask people already involved in or connected to the club** to volunteer – many volunteers initially become involved in volunteering through friends, family or because they are already involved in the club or sport in another capacity.
* **Provide potential volunteers with a realistic preview of what the job entails** – volunteers need to understand the size and nature of the task ahead of them before deciding to commit their time and energy to a position.
* If possible, **provide a job description** including meeting times, major tasks, average weekly or monthly time commitments, benefits and conditions. This will help potential volunteers make an informed decision about whether a job might suit their skills, experience and availability.
* **Make sure new recruits feel valued** – they are giving up their leisure time so it is important they feel the role is important.

# Challenges

* It can be difficult to attract a pool of qualified applicants using an informal recruitment process.
* Some organisations do not have the constitutional power to recruit individuals for some voluntary positions.
* Sporting organisations are generally bound to elect board or committee members or to appoint some members on an ex-officio basis.
* The number of positions to be filled is usually greater than the number of people prepared to volunteer.

# Selecting and screening volunteers

The selection process involves choosing the individual who best meets the requirements of a position. Depending on the level of the position [policy/management or operational], the selection process can involve a number of steps, which may include screening, formal interviews, testing, reference checks and a physical examination. However, it is not often that community based sport organisations are in a position to work through a formal volunteer selection process.

An important consideration in the selection process is whether a position can be appointed or whether the constitution requires it be elected.

## Elected positions

Club or association members usually elect committee or board members to a position, which makes the selection process largely redundant.

## Appointed positions

When electing new volunteers, it is important to consider the following:

* Do they have the required accreditation?
* Are they prepared to undertake relevant training?
* Do they have experience working with others in a positive way?
* Are they of good character?

## Reference checks

Reference checks are advisable when appointing individuals to a position that involves close contact with children (i.e. any person under 18 years). There may also be statutory requirements under child protection legislation, to run a criminal history check or for the applicant to provide a written declaration that they are not a ‘prohibited’ person (i.e. someone who has a conviction for a sex offence). Criminal history checks may also be necessary if a reference cannot be verified or a reference raises any questions about the character or integrity of a potential volunteer.

Appointing a person to a volunteer position as a ‘last resort’ may be more harmful in the long term than temporarily leaving the position vacant and starting the recruitment process again.

Recruitment and selection checklist

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| Appoint volunteer coordinator |  |
| Prepare projections for human resource needs |  |
| Conduct a job analysis |  |
| Prepare a job description |  |
| Develop a recruitment plan |  |
| Implement recruitment plan |  |
| Screen applications and select or shortlist volunteers to be interviewed |  |
| Conduct interviews and select successful volunteers |  |
| Where appropriate check volunteer references |  |
| Notify successful volunteers and set up a time for orientation |  |
| Notify unsuccessful volunteers |  |