

Booklet

14

A guide for sport and recreation clubs and associations in Western Australia.

Clubs' guide to volunteer management



Department of
Sport and Recreation

Sport and recreation builds
stronger, healthier, happier
and safer communities.

If you would like to make one of the most important resources in your club a priority, then this 'Clubs' guide to volunteer management' is for you!

This resource will help you to effectively manage volunteers so that you keep those you've currently got and attract new ones to your club.

What is volunteering?

Volunteering is an activity where people donate their time and effort, of their own free will and without financial gain, sharing their knowledge, expertise and skills for the benefit of others or the community.¹

Why manage volunteers?

Volunteers are the backbone of sport and recreation in Western Australia.

The number of sport and recreation volunteers has remained steady over the past five years, but the way they volunteer has changed. With today's busy lifestyles people prefer to volunteer for shorter periods on single or limited projects. They want a fulfilling experience and for someone to thank them for their efforts.

Organisations must have a volunteer management program that is innovative and flexible if they are to better meet the needs and expectations of the modern volunteer.

Did you know?

- Sport and recreation volunteers represent **35.2 per cent** (187,200 persons) of all volunteers in Western Australia.²
- **Forty-seven per cent** of sport and recreation volunteers also volunteered for at least one other organisation.²
- The majority of volunteer work is carried out by people aged **35 to 54** years.²
- The volunteer contribution to the Australian sport sector is conservatively valued at **\$1.6 billion**.³

¹ Government of Western Australia. (2002). *Valuing Volunteers – A Shared Vision*. Perth, Western Australia: Department for Community Development.

² Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2002). *General Social Survey: Summary of Results*. (No. 4159.0). Canberra, Australian Capital Territory: Author.

³ Economic Impact of Sport. Sport, Vol. 18; No. 1, pp.10–13, 1998.

Trends of the modern volunteer

The things that motivate and attract volunteers have changed over the years. These days they are looking for different experiences than the volunteers of 10 or 20 years ago. Your organisation will need to recognise and respond to these to better recruit and retain volunteers.

Trend

Busy lifestyles, changing family structures and changing work patterns affect people's ability to volunteer.

Response

Shorter volunteer commitments, job sharing and flexible hours are more appealing. Let your volunteers know exactly how long you will need them by setting start and end dates.

Trend

Sense of 'community' has diminished, as has the concept of "giving back". People will no longer volunteer for the sake of volunteering.

Response

Find creative ways to recruit volunteers. Promote volunteering for your club like you are selling a fantastic product.

Trend

'Baby Boomers' are approaching retirement and will be looking for ways to put back into the community. They are a huge source of potential volunteers that so far has been untapped.

Response

'Baby Boomers' have great skills to offer, as they are often retired professionals, but do not want to waste their time! Offer them a position that interests them and lets them use the skills they have gained over their professional career.

Trend

There has been a steady decrease in the number of young people volunteering. This can be attributed to them not understanding the benefits of volunteering, or being considered too young by the club and not approached.

Response

Look at the strengths of young people and the skills they can bring to your organisation. Identify special positions they can fill. For example, most young people are pretty good with technology so why not recruit them to develop a club website or membership database? Promote the benefits of having volunteer roles on their résumé.

The volunteer coordinator

Most sport and recreation clubs appoint people to key positions such as president, treasurer or secretary to provide direction to the club and to manage its finances and administration. Only a few have considered the way they manage one of their most important resources – volunteers.

Why not appoint someone within your club with responsibility for volunteers?

The volunteer coordinator would drive the club's volunteer management program and provide ongoing support and become a point of contact for volunteers.

The role of the volunteer coordinator

The volunteer coordinator duties can include the following:

- Work out how many volunteers are needed and for what roles.
- Develop position descriptions for each role.
- Plan how and where to recruit volunteers.
- Help volunteers feel welcome and supported.
- Organise selection and screening procedures.
- Put together orientation kits and programs.
- Develop policies and procedures for volunteers.
- Arrange training and education opportunities.
- Look after the volunteer database and record.

- Develop ways to recognise and reward volunteer effort.
- Plan for volunteer retention and replacement.

Skills and attributes of the volunteer coordinator

When looking for the right volunteer coordinator, try to find someone who has these skills and attributes:

- Positive and enthusiastic.
- Excellent communication skills.
- Good at dealing with difficult people and conflicts.
- Plan and set goals.
- Organising volunteers.
- Time management.
- Negotiation skills.
- They know how to delegate.
- Understand the nature of volunteering and what motivates people to volunteer.

Position within committee structure

How the volunteer coordinator fits within your club's committee structure will differ depending on the size of your club, the number of volunteers and the importance that is placed on managing volunteers.

The committee must first decide if the volunteer coordinator will be a separate role or an addition to the committee structure.

Making it part of the committee structure will ensure there is an ongoing commitment to volunteer management. Keep in mind that the club's constitution will need to be altered to reflect this change.

Depending on the amount of time the role will need, the volunteer coordinator could also be incorporated into an existing position (e.g. vice-president/volunteer coordinator).

Volunteer management

Volunteer management involves bringing volunteers into the club, looking after them while they fulfil their duties and then planning for when they leave.

Figure 1 below gives an overview of the process of volunteer management.

Although these stages are numbered (1 to 6), volunteer management does not have a start and end point. It is a cyclical and ongoing process.

This resource describes each of the six stages of volunteer management.

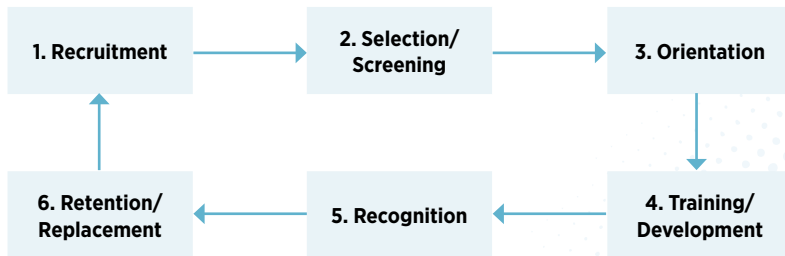


Figure 1: Volunteer Management Model

1 Recruitment

Recruitment is the process of attracting new volunteers to your club. So, when you approach a potential volunteer, it is important to promote your club as an exciting and positive organisation to be involved with!

Here are some alternative places to source volunteers and how to recruit them.

- Produce volunteer information kits including position descriptions for volunteer roles.
- Check past and present membership lists for potential volunteers.
- Ask members for their occupation on your membership form to identify skills that may be suitable to a volunteer position (e.g. if a member has indicated that his/her occupation is a registrar, you may be able to approach them as a potential secretary or treasurer).
- Provide new members with information about ways they can get involved with your organisation as a volunteer (include in membership information).
- Use the local community newspaper – classified advertisements, letters to the editor, feature articles.
- Produce posters, pamphlets or flyers that promote the club and the types of things volunteers can do – distribute where potential volunteers may visit.
- Organise community notices on the radio.

- Ask private companies to include volunteering in pre-retirement training sessions.
- Promote your organisation's volunteering opportunities to schools, TAFEs and universities.
- Advertise volunteering opportunities through corporations, businesses and sponsors.
- Offer young members the opportunity to take on the role of apprentice volunteers. Use existing and experienced volunteers as mentors.
- Promote your organisation and volunteer roles at local retirement villages and organisations.
- Advertise for volunteers on your organisation's website.
- Contact Volunteering WA – utilise their volunteer referral service: www.volunteer.org.au
- Advertise for volunteers on the 'Go Volunteer' website: www.govolunteer.com.au
- Offer volunteers the opportunity to 'job share' their volunteer role with a friend or partner.
- Try the personal approach ... simply ASK!

2 Selection and screening

For many sport and recreation clubs, it is rare to have more volunteers than positions. So, they may have little experience in having to choose the right person for a volunteer position. But you still need to have screening processes in place to ensure that volunteers are suitable for the positions they fulfil.

There are many ways to select and screen potential volunteers. You might like to consider a combination of the following:

- Position descriptions.
- Application forms.

- Interviews.
- Referee checks.
- National Police Clearance or National Police Check.
- Declaration forms.
- Code of Conduct forms.

3 Orientation

The best way to help someone feel part of the team is to show them around the organisation. Providing an orientation program for new volunteers will help them to settle in a little faster. The more effort you put in at the start to ensure your volunteer workforce feels well-informed and valued, the less work it will be in the long run.

Orientation can take place in a number of ways. You may like to try one or more of the following:

- Information or orientation kits.
- Video and PowerPoint presentations.
- Group or individual orientations.
- Hand-over with the previous volunteer.

During the orientation, make sure you cover the following:

- Any rules and procedures.
- Volunteer policies and procedures.
- Financial procedures.
- Occupational health and safety issues.
- Position description for the volunteer role.
- Facilities (e.g. parking, kitchen, toilet).
- Introduce them to other volunteers and committee members in your club.
- Anything else that will help the volunteers to feel comfortable starting in their role.

4 Training and development

Training and development is a vital part of a good volunteer management program. Volunteers who are offered some form of training (formal or informal) are more confident, comfortable and efficient in their role, and everyone benefits. It is also good risk management.

There are several different ways you can train your volunteers:

Pre-placement training

This should cover the skills needed to commence the volunteer duties. For example, a sports trainer shouldn't begin duties until he/she has completed a first aid or sports trainer's course.

On the job

This refers to teaching or supervision of volunteers while they are performing their duties. This can be a hand-over with the previous volunteer, someone who has experience with performing that role or the volunteer coordinator. You may also consider bringing in an external person, for example someone from another club

Training courses and seminars

A list of training opportunities for volunteers is available from the Department of Sport and Recreation.

5 Recognition

Volunteers do not expect lots of thanks and big hugs, but they really appreciate it when their contribution is valued and recognised.

Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Smile, say hello and thank your volunteers regularly.
- Send welcome letters when volunteers are first recruited.

- Include volunteers in organisational charts.
- Write letters and postcards of thanks to volunteers.
- Write letters of reference and include details of service.
- Provide identification pins, badges, shirts or caps.
- Provide discounted memberships to volunteers.
- Acknowledge and profile volunteers in newsletters and on websites.
- Present volunteer awards at annual general meetings or awards ceremonies.
- Feature your volunteers at special events throughout the year (e.g. state championships, national league games, family days).
- Provide complimentary tickets to volunteers for special events and functions.
- Send get well, birthday and Christmas cards to your volunteers.
- Arrange discounts at local sport stores or restaurants for your volunteers.
- Have a 'Volunteer of the Month' award.
- Name events or facilities after long-serving volunteers.
- Award life memberships for long serving volunteers.
- Reimburse out-of-pocket expenses for volunteers.
- Acknowledge the efforts of volunteers during committee meetings.
- Hold special 'thank you' or social functions in honour of volunteers.
- Present volunteers with a special memento recognising their service to the organisation.

- Farewell volunteers when they move away from the area or leave the organisation (perhaps offer to write to their new club to recommend them for a volunteering role).
- Arrange for free or discounted use of facilities.
- Present special awards for 1, 3, 5, 10, 15 and more years of service.

One way to collect this information is by getting feedback from volunteers who are leaving your club – or exit interviews. These can be formal or informal, and conducted in person, over the phone or in the form of a feedback sheet that the person can complete and return.

6 Retention/replacement

Maintaining a stable group of long-term volunteers is the goal of all sport and recreation organisations. A stable volunteering base:

- reduces recruiting time and costs;
- reduces training and education costs; and
- provides an important sense of continuity within the organisation.

However, it is inevitable that you will have to replace volunteers. How you manage this replacement process is important to:

- improve how you manage remaining volunteers;
- improve your volunteer management program;
- make the transition of volunteers have as little impact as possible on the running of the club; and
- make the departing volunteer feel that they can come back to the club if their current situation changes.

When a volunteer leaves your organisation, this is an ideal time to gather information about the volunteer's experience. Evaluating the reasons why volunteers leave an organisation can be invaluable for improving your volunteer management practices.

Volunteer management checklist

When planning for volunteer management, you need to consider the following:

- Appoint a volunteer coordinator or allocate the volunteers portfolio to a committee member.
- Include a Volunteer Management Plan in your business or strategic plan (if appropriate).
- Review all volunteer positions and skills required – can any positions be broken down to provide short-term volunteering options?
- Develop position descriptions or duty statements for each of these roles.
- Identify skills already in the organisation and match these skills to positions.
- Identify recruitment strategies to fill the gaps.
- Check insurance coverage is adequate.
- Establish policy and procedures for screening of volunteers where required.
- Develop an orientation process for new volunteers.
- Outline and communicate roles and responsibilities of volunteers and the organisation.
- Identify training needs of the volunteers and find training opportunities (local government, state sporting associations).
- Identify other ongoing support that will need to be provided.
- Allocate a budget for your volunteers (out of pocket expenses, recognition).
- Keep an up-to-date database of your volunteers.
- Put in place ongoing recognition strategies.

Volunteer management action plan

When implementing volunteer management strategies, it is a good idea to develop an action plan. This will help your club adopt volunteer management strategies.

When developing an action plan for your club, try to incorporate each of the stages of the Volunteer Management Model (see figure 1). For each component, state what you want to achieve, when you want to achieve it and who will be responsible for doing it (see example below).

Your volunteer management action plan should be reviewed and updated regularly.

EXAMPLE ACTION PLAN:

	WHAT?	WHEN?	WHO?
Recruitment	Develop position descriptions for each of the volunteer roles	Before start of season	Volunteer coordinator, in conjunction with relevant committee members
Selection and screening	Develop policies and procedures for selecting and screening all volunteers	Before start of season	Volunteer coordinator and president
Orientation	Develop an orientation session and information kit for all volunteers	By end of season	Volunteer coordinator
Training and development	Ensure all coaches have a level one coaching qualification	Before coach starts	Volunteer coordinator (treasurer to administer budget)
Recognition	Send birthday cards to all volunteers	Ongoing	Volunteer coordinator (secretary to maintain database)
Replacement	Conduct exit interviews with all departing volunteers	Ongoing	President or volunteer coordinator

Other resources

This resource is part of the Club Development Officer Scheme, which provides assistance to Western Australian sport and recreation clubs and organisations to become better managed, more sustainable and to provide good quality services to members and participants.

Other resources in the series include:

- 1 Step-by-step to starting a new club
- 2 Planning for your club – The future is in your hands
- 3 Taking the lead! A guide for club presidents
- 4 The key to efficiency – The club secretary
- 5 Show me the money – A guide for the club treasurer
- 6 Effective club meetings – A guide for the chairperson
- 7 Take the ‘in’ out of ineffective – 10 steps to running successful meetings
- 8 Lighten the load and delegate – Help for the overworked committee member
- 9 You have the answers – Solving club problems
- 10 Marketing and promoting your club
- 11 Sponsorship – Seeking and servicing a sponsor
- 12 Establishing your club constitution and becoming incorporated
- 13 Risky business – A club guide to risk management
- 14 Clubs’ guide to volunteer management
- 15 Member protection for clubs
- 16 How to be more inclusive of people from diverse backgrounds
- 17 Passport into schools – Linking sports with schools
- 18 Youth sport – Junior sport policy
- 19 Long-term involvement – Junior sport policy
- 20 Getting young people involved – Junior sport policy
- 21 Physical growth and maturation – Junior sport policy
- 22 Sport pathways – Junior sport policy
- 23 Forming links – Junior sport policy
- 24 People making it happen – Junior sport policy
- 25 Quality coaching – Junior sport policy
- 26 Making sport safe – Junior sport policy
- 27 The law and sport – Junior sport policy
- 28 Top 20 tips for officials
- 29 Top 20 tips for successful coaching

You will find the full series of the booklets on the Department of Sport and Recreation’s ClubsOnline website: www.dsr.wa.gov.au/clubsonline



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