

Volunteer Recruitment, Recognition and Retention

Hints & Tips

Introduction

Volunteers are the glue that keep our football clubs together. Without them our clubs just wouldn't function. Volunteers perform a variety of roles within football clubs. They include team managers, coaches, canteen officers, committee members, ground and facility keepers, scoreboard operators, ground announcers and many more.

This resource is designed to give FFV clubs some helpful hints and tips regarding volunteer recruitment, retention and recognition. Not all will be relevant to your club, however the introduction of just a handful of new initiatives may make the difference between being able to recruit and retain club volunteers.

Volunteer Recruitment

Attracting volunteers to your club can be a very difficult task, yet it is obviously a necessity. It is vital to have a clear set of practices in place to make volunteering as attractive as possible. Some ideas that can be implemented include:

- Let potential volunteers know 'what's in it for them'. It may be a reference, something to add to their CV, training, meeting new people, personal satisfaction, learning new skills or being involved in a successful local club operation.
- Make them aware of any particular benefits available to them through your club. Reimbursement for certain expenses, invitations to club events or even a specific sponsor that they can access discounts from.
- Look for a shorter commitment. Don't indicate to a potential volunteer that you need them for two years. Maybe trial them for a three-six month

period to see how they go. Once you've got them involved, they're more likely to remain involved.

- Make sure your job description of their role sounds interesting and inviting.
- Let your potential volunteers know that they will help to shape their own volunteer position and be included in an evaluation process to improve and develop the role.
- Provide appropriate training and education for each volunteer. Don't just throw them into the deep end without any assistance as this is not enjoyable for anyone. Take them through the specific responsibilities of their role. This can be completed at a pre season Volunteer Night.
- One member of the club's committee should have 'Volunteer Management' as part of their portfolio. The Volunteer Manager should make themselves available to individual volunteers and report back to the committee on any urgent issues which require attention.

Where can you find volunteers?

Finding volunteers is not an easy process, however there are many avenues that should be pursued to make sure the club is covering all its bases.

- Advertise on your club website.
- FFV has a Club Noticeboard. Make sure you send your advertisement through to info@footballfedvic.com.au
- Ask your club sponsors to advertise through their various media streams.
- Ask local business to put your advertisement up in their shop window.
- Your local Council will generally have newsletters and various media streams for you to advertise through.
- A player's family (parents, brothers/sisters etc) will be the most likely source of your volunteers. Have a parent information night at the beginning of the season to explain your volunteer roles and the importance to the club of filling these. An incentive for parents to volunteer could include lower registration fees for their children.
- Contact your local newspaper and provide them with a good news story. In this you may be able to include information about volunteering at the club.
- The Victorian Volunteering Portal. There are external associations that look after volunteering. Volunteer Victoria is the peak body for volunteering in this state. Your club can register on the portal and register its volunteering opportunities. There is also a matching service attached to this site. For more information go to www.volunteer.vic.gov.au

Volunteer Welcome Pack

When a new volunteer does join your club, it's important to formally recognise them as an official member. A great way to do this is by providing them with a Volunteer Welcome Pack. Documents that should be included in such a pack are:

- A copy of the volunteer job description.
- A personal welcoming letter from the President of the club.
- A list of committee members, volunteers, coaches and team leaders and their roles and responsibilities within the club.
- Information on upcoming volunteer training opportunities.
- Reimbursement information for out of pocket expenses.
- Relevant contact information for internal and external stakeholders.

Retaining through Recognition – Reward your volunteers

An important aspect of volunteer recognition is to listen to the concerns of your volunteers. Below you will find some strategies that can be implemented to help retain your valuable volunteers.

- Show appreciation, recognise the efforts of your volunteers and value their contribution.
- Give feedback and receive (and listen to!) feedback.
- Give volunteers ownership/responsibility of their particular area/team.
- Evaluate job descriptions and work through recommendations.
- Enable volunteers to have input into the planning phase.
- Allow your volunteers to develop their roles in areas that are of particular interest to them. Eg. If they are a team manager one year and have an interest in coaching, encourage them to complete a relevant coaching course.
- Introduce volunteers to each other and encourage open communication lines between volunteers.
- Don't undercut your volunteer's confidence. Look at mistakes as learning experiences.
- Be flexible! Ensure your volunteers know that you are prepared to adjust volunteer work to suit their schedules, where possible.
- Assist your volunteers in accessing training and development opportunities.

In order to retain your volunteers it is imperative that you reward them appropriately. This does not mean providing them with monetary incentives or expensive end of season gifts. Generally volunteers just want to feel like they are completing an important role and know that this is recognised. There are however some sensible ways of providing your volunteers with tangible rewards. Some of these include.

- Hold a Volunteer Recognition Night at the end of the season.
- Provide volunteers with a certificate of recognition.
- Small gifts. Perhaps search for a sponsor for your volunteers and have them sponsor your "Volunteer Management Program".
- Provide volunteers with free entry to club events.
- Include volunteers in team photos.
- Nominate your volunteers for volunteer awards through your local Council, FFV and FFA.

Further Information

To discuss information in this document, please don't hesitate to contact FFV Club Development Coordinator, Anuhari Mallawarachchi on 9474-1859 or email amallawarachchi@footballfedvic.com.au

We also welcome your feedback and would love to hear about any additional initiatives that your clubs has put into practice.

Links

The following organisations have some excellent resources relating to recruiting and retaining volunteers. Check out their websites for further information.

Football Federation Victoria – www.footballfedvic.com.au

Football Federation Australia – www.footballaustralia.com.au

Australian Sports Commission – www.ausport.gov.au

Volunteering Victoria – www.volunteer.vic.gov.au

Vicsport – www.vicsport.asn.au