



# ***Recruiting and Retaining Volunteers***

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# ***1. Introduction***

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Volunteers are the life blood of every sport and leisure organisation in New Zealand. They contribute time and energy year after year to assist in the development of sport and leisure activities. Without these people sport and leisure organisations fail to function effectively.

Volunteers are extremely valuable, deserving considerable praise and public recognition - which is not always forthcoming.

While there is a move towards employing paid administrators, it is clear that clubs and organisations will continue to rely heavily on volunteer administrators.

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This resource focuses on valuing, growing and developing your volunteer team.

Two key points to consider in relation to sports clubs and organisations:

- Business management has progressed rapidly, giving the general public higher expectations of quality and excellence in organisations.
- Employment, social and personal pressures encourage people to be selective in their leisure time and gain value and enjoyment from recreational activities.

*These days, sport can be regarded on three different levels:*

- Sport as recreation - holiday and weekend activities.
- Sport at club level - competition with regular training.
- Sport at championship level - representative and international.



## **2. Background to Volunteer Involvement**

Volunteering has taken on a more sophisticated role in organisations, requiring a serious commitment from both the volunteers and the organisation. Competition to gain dedicated volunteers is becoming more intense. Management systems need to be in place which will address:

- Recruitment strategies
- Training
- Recognizing and valuing contributions
- Assessment and evaluation

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### **Why do you Need Volunteers?**

Volunteers are needed to perform many tasks and fulfil various roles and responsibilities. Take a moment to analyse WHY your organisation needs volunteers. It may be to:

- Coach sports teams
- Organise fund raising events
- Take care of equipment and building maintenance
- Instruct or teach activities
- Judge, referee, umpire
- Serve as a club officer eg, the treasurer, secretary, or patron of a club
- Run an event

- Organise club nights/days
- Manage a team trip
- Or a host of other reasons

**Summary**

You need to be clear why your organisation needs volunteers.

## **What Benefits can you Offer Potential Volunteers?**

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Your club is just one of many competing for volunteer assistance and people's time. What makes your club a special or attractive organisation for the volunteer?

Promote the positive aspects that YOUR club or organisation offers to volunteers:

- New friendships
- New skills
- Rewards of involvement
- Exciting opportunities
- Training and personal development
- Competition
- Trips, visits, social occasions
- Gain CV references - "looks good on your CV"

**Summary**

Promote the benefits that your organisation offers to volunteers.



## **Why do People Volunteer?**

The volunteer is a community representative. People volunteer for many different reasons, such as to:

- Learn new skills
- Gain training
- Help others
- Increase enthusiasm and energy
- Share talents, abilities and experience
- Fight boredom
- Make new friends
- Build self confidence
- Explore career opportunities
- Feel needed, useful and appreciated
- Gain a new direction in life
- Give something back to the community
- Be a team member
- Get closer to the sport or activity your organisation represents
- Contribute to the sport or activity of the club
- Have fun and enjoy themselves

### **Summary**

Promote the things that volunteers gain from your organisation.

## **3. Management of Volunteers**

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### *Key Elements*

- Recruitment strategy
- Training strategy
- Retention strategy

### **Focusing Workshop**

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Before you start on a recruitment campaign, bring together key members of your organisation for a brainstorming session to examine the role of volunteers. Some areas which may be useful to include are:

- In a general overview, identify the people who have helped your achievers to achieve.
- What have your experiences been as a volunteer?
- Where have you come into contact with volunteers - what are your impressions/experiences?
- Summarise from all members of the group which volunteer activities you are presently involved in and why.
- What would be needed to improve the volunteer experience (e.g. having contact with other volunteers)?
- What can your organisation offer volunteers?
- Consider the role of a Volunteer Manager for your club.

### **Where Might you Find Volunteers?**

They are all round you in the community:

- Your work mates



- Your friends
- Your family
- People who have retired from employment e.g. local Senior Citizens, Fifties Forward group members
- Students in training looking for experience
- Unemployed or part-time workers
- People looking for outside interests, such as those involved in childcare
- Ex-team players

**Summary**

Explore with your colleagues possible sources of volunteers.

*Checklist for recruitment / retention of volunteer positions:*

- What is the purpose of the position?
- What does the organisation want from this position?
- What are the key tasks and responsibilities involved?
- What skills are needed to perform this role?
- What qualifications are needed (if required)?
- What training will be given?
- What support systems are available?
- How is the position reviewed/evaluated?
- What is the induction process? When, where, how?

## **Planning the Role of the Volunteer Manager**

*This can be a two stage process:*

### **STAGE ONE**

Working with other key club members, draft a position description for a Volunteer Manager. Some responsibilities may be:

- Determining what volunteers are needed and why.
- Writing task and position descriptions.
- Planning the recruitment strategy.
- Preparing written material for posters, newsletters etc.
- Organising interviews with volunteers.
- Holding regular meetings with volunteers.
- Supervising volunteers or delegating to other members.
- Organising training of volunteers.
- Keeping up-to-date records of volunteers.
- Keeping volunteers motivated and enthusiastic.
- Revising volunteer duties and position descriptions.

### **STAGE TWO**

Appoint a volunteer manager who will review the role and negotiate any adjustments.

- The volunteer manager will be responsible for reporting and action on recruitment, training and retention strategies.
- The volunteer manager will need a strong commitment to the role, and the time and energy to devote to it. Excellent interpersonal and organisational skills are needed.



## **Recruitment Strategy**

The objective is to examine and plan every aspect of volunteer recruitment.

### ***FORMAT***

Re-examine why you need volunteers:

- How many volunteers do you need?
- To do what?
- When?
- For how long?
- What demands will be made on the volunteer?
- By whom?
- What authority will the volunteer have?
- Who is the volunteer answerable to?
- What support is there for the new volunteer?
- Is there time available for trained volunteers to work with new volunteers?
- Will trained volunteers and other personnel accept the new volunteer?
- What sort of people do you want in these roles?
- What skills will they need?

Plan your recruitment campaign and present to club committee, looking for additional suggestions from members. Consider the following:

- Checking past and present membership lists.
- Organising a 'recruitment' drive using current volunteers to promote the club and its activities.

- Holding 'bring a friend' social events.
- Using the local and community newspaper - classified ads, letters to the editor, feature articles etc.
- Organising a volunteer 'pledge' scheme among current members.
- Producing volunteer information kits.
- Introducing a volunteer apprentice scheme for present members.
- Producing 'fliers' for mailboxes.
- Holding a fun evening where trained volunteers share positive experiences.
- Making a video or cassette about the club/organisation.
- Having a stall near shopping malls.
- Offering to present sessions at colleges/polytechnics promoting your club, particularly at 5th/6th/7th form physical education/recreation studies level.
- Running community information evenings.
- Putting community notices on radio.
- Talking to other organisations.

Have position descriptions prepared in advance *appropriate to your organisation* ( see Appendix).

*Key roles needing position descriptions will be:*

- Chairperson
- Secretary (see Appendix)
- Treasurer
- Club Captain
- Volunteer Manager
- Publicity/Marketing Manager



The position descriptions will need updating annually. Involve your position holders in the review. Possibly make it a committee team workshop.

- Advertise the positions on club noticeboards or in your newsletter.

*Some recruitment suggestions to explore:*

### ***MEMBERS***

Your members are your best source of volunteers. Ask if there are family members who may like to be involved (encourage family involvement).

Members may be in business and have access to interested work colleagues and/or friends.



### ***FORMER MEMBERS / PARTICIPANTS***

An excellent source of experience and knowledge. Often people who may be retired or semi-retired have more time and would enjoy the club involvement.

### ***SUPPORTERS / SPECTATORS***

A valuable group of people who may not always be aware of committee roles and needs.

### ***SCHOOLS, POLYTECHNICS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS***

Students are often looking for practical experience and could welcome this opportunity.

### **WORD OF CAUTION!**

*Make sure you are getting the right people!*

- Resist the temptation to take everyone who contacts you. Have an interview selection process in place.
- Plan your recruitment strategy well in advance and ensure it is ongoing.
- Spread the tasks across more people to lighten the workload. Ensure roles are realistic loads for volunteers.
- Be honest in your description of the organisation.

### Summary

- Plan your recruitment strategy well and present it to the Committee.
- All relevant information should be distributed as widely as possible.
- All information should be attractively presented and be:
  - Clear
  - Concise
  - Correct
  - Courteous ('user friendly')
- Follow up any possible leads/interest shown in volunteering.
- **Ensure names and contact telephone/fax numbers are clearly visible and current.**

## Training Strategy

Training is a key factor in today's business environment. As training can be linked to job satisfaction it will have an influence in volunteer retention. Remember one of the reasons people volunteer is to gain new skills and experience.

A training plan for your organisation is essential if you are to function effectively.

### *Where to Find Training?*

- Explore your members - you may have skilled consultants/managers who can help.
- Other local organisations offer training opportunities (for example, local authorities, polytechnics, YMCA/YWCA, Presbyterian Support Services, youth organisations, Maori Women's Welfare League, community arts organisations).
- Join with other clubs to plan a training event.
- Encourage members to grasp any occupational training offered to them.
- Try approaching local training organisations for sponsored places on courses.



- National/regional structures for sport and leisure usually provide training programmes and/or manuals for training coaches, umpires, officials, administrators (for example, Coaching NZ, regional sports trusts, national/regional sport organisations).

## *TRAINING PLAN*

*Prepare a training plan for your organisation.*

*This will include:*

- Sources of training
- Organisation/club training programmes for the current year
- Volunteer manager meeting with each volunteer twice a year, offering support, checking on role performance, and offering training suggestions where needed

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## **Retention Strategy**

**Well done.** You have successfully encouraged people to volunteer for the organisation - that's the easy part. Now you have to retain them!

*Look again at the points raised:*

- Why do people volunteer?
- What benefits can you offer potential volunteers?

*Volunteers want to feel:*

- Welcome
- Part of the team
- Needed
- Useful

*Here is the A-B-C of your retention strategy:*

- A - INDUCTION**
- B - SUPPORT**
- C - RECOGNITION**

## *A - Induction*

A successful induction is crucial to volunteer retention. The process will include:

### *First contact point:*

- Meet new volunteers and make them feel welcome, special and appreciated from the start.
- Arrange to spend some time exploring their interests, reasons for volunteering, and expectations from the organisation.
- Make time to brief them on the organisation's goals, people involved, and facilities.
- Outline their specific role and responsibilities.
- Encourage questions.
- Identify any training needs.
- Provide a 'buddy system' for support.

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New volunteers may need help to gain experience in various roles. Volunteers may also need support in developing and retaining confidence.

Current volunteers will need reviews and training updates.

## *B - Support*

### *Maintain regular contact with new volunteers.*

- Show appreciation of a job well done.
- Continually offer help and support.
- Give any training needed, or suggestions for gaining skills/ experience.
- Listen regularly.
- Strengthen links between the volunteer team members.



## *C - Recognition*

Volunteers are truly special people. All volunteers should be treated equally alongside paid employees. Continually acknowledging their involvement and contribution in unique ways is very important.

Devise your own volunteer recognition programme and publicise this to all members. You could:

- Write letters and postcards of thanks.
- Provide certificates of appreciation.
- Give identification pins, t-shirts.
- Acknowledge them in club newsletters.
- Present volunteer awards at the AGM.
- Give complimentary tickets to special events and functions.
- Send get well and birthday cards.
- Arrange discounts at recreation and sport stores or restaurants.
- Award life memberships.
- Reimburse for 'out of pocket' expenses.
- Hold social events in honour of volunteers.
- Acknowledge their efforts during committee meetings.
- Farewell people when they move away from the area or organisation.
- Provide meal and petrol vouchers.
- Provide opportunities to meet key sports people.
- Display photographs of or by them in clubhouse.
- Hold 'Volunteer of the Month' award.

### **Summary**

- Ensure your volunteers have positive, enjoyable experiences.
- Know and recognise each volunteer and use their names.
- Continually acknowledge appreciation of their contribution.
- Give rewards where possible.

## 4. Checklist for Recruiting and Retaining Volunteers

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*Use this as a checklist and follow the steps through:*

1. Decide why your organisation needs volunteers and what you can offer them.
2. Appoint a Volunteer Manager.
3. Work out specific role for volunteers.
4. Decide what sort of people you want as volunteers, how many and for how long.
5. Write position descriptions for each role.
6. Plan your recruitment campaign.
7. Individually interview the volunteer and recruit people that complement other members of the team.
8. Appoint to specific positions.
9. Induct them into their new roles, providing support and feedback regularly.
10. Involve volunteers in team meetings and in all matters that affect them.
11. Provide opportunities for training.
12. Manage, support and evaluate performance.
13. Reward and recognise volunteers appropriately.
14. Make necessary changes in roles and volunteers programmes.
15. Review these steps regularly.



Desirable Personal Qualities:

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Experience and/or Qualifications:

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*Timing*

- Approximate hours per week
- Frequency of work
- Days



## Appendix I

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*Example*

### Position Description

<b>Position Title:</b>	Secretary
<b>Responsible To:</b>	Chairperson
<b>Direct Relationship with:</b>	Club Captain/other committee members
<b>Purpose of Role:</b>	To provide secretarial services to the organisation in a professional and effective manner.

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### **KEY TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Mail:	Clearing box/responding to correspondence
Telephone:	Dealing with incoming/outgoing telephone calls
Correspondence:	Word processing, memos/letters/notices
Meetings:	Preparation for meeting - sending agenda and notice Attending meeting and minuting proceedings Producing minutes and circulating (if required)
Filing:	Setting up appropriate systems Maintaining all records
Supplies/Equipment:	Ordering and maintenance of supplies/equipment in relation to secretarial role

### **EXPERIENCE AND/OR QUALIFICATIONS**

Understanding of organisation's activities and personnel

Understanding of office procedures

Understanding of filing

Ability in word processing

Ability to minute meetings

Good telephone skills

### **DESIRABLE PERSONAL QUALITIES**

Reliability

Good interpersonal skill with people

Enthusiasm and energy

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### **TIMING**

- Approximately 2 hours a week
- Attendance at monthly Executive meeting (2 hours)



## References and Further Reading

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The information in this text was researched and compiled by Valerie Jackson, Jackson Training, Wellington.

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# National Qualifications Framework

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Following completion of this course, some participants may wish to seek credit for relevant unit standards registered on the National Qualifications Framework.

This **Recruiting and Retaining Volunteers** *Running Sport 1* contains, wholly or in part, similar content to the competencies specified in the following unit standard:

Unit Number	Unit Title
4884	Manage volunteers in recreation or sports clubs, societies and organisations

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Those wishing to pursue this option should firstly seek up to date information, as new unit standards continue to be added to the Framework and registered unit standards are subject to regular revision.

*Further information can be obtained from:*

- the **Sport, Fitness & Recreation Industry Training Organisation** (SFRITO)  
P O Box 2183  
WELLINGTON  
Telephone 04-3859047
- your local **Regional Sports Trust**
- your local **training providers** (eg, polytechnic, schools or private training establishments)

These organisations can advise on next steps and, if appropriate, put the participant in touch with a registered assessor in their area.



## ***Recruiting And Retaining Volunteers***

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Sport is an integral part of the Kiwi lifestyle. It enriches our lives, enhances our health and brings people and communities together. Sport fosters the development of excellence, team spirit, competition and pride. It unites people of all ages and walks of life.

Sport and leisure is a huge growth industry in New Zealand. Spin-offs include substantial benefits to the economy - millions of dollars in the case of big events. As a nation, we're mad about sport and justifiably proud of our successes.

Sport is now big business and clubs are needing to keep ahead of the latest principles and practices in marketing and development in order to survive and prosper. To do this, many clubs today are adopting a strategic approach to club administration and are becoming more business-like in the way they manage their programmes and events. As a result sports bodies and other non-profit organisations throughout New Zealand are achieving some spectacular results.

By becoming more entrepreneurial, clubs and non-profit organisations are gaining an enhanced public profile, growing their membership and attracting strong commercial partnerships, such as through sponsorships.

Sport in New Zealand is still dependent, to a large degree, on the huge number of dedicated volunteers who give so freely of their time and energies. Therefore, the Hillary Commission has developed a series of information packages with volunteers like you in mind.

*The topics in this series include:*

Recruiting and Retaining Volunteers

The Club Secretary

Managing Meetings

Marketing and Public Relations

Funding and Sponsorship

Club Planning

Managing Money

Event Management

The Sports Team Manager

Some of these resources may be new to you, while others may simply summarise areas you already know a lot about. It's up to you to choose the topics that are of greatest interest and relevance to the volunteer work you do in sport.



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