



Dragon Scales Six

Our People Management

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Introduction

Volunteers - unpaid workers and helpers - are the lifeblood of any sport. These people give up their time to organise regattas, set up on the day, cook the sausages, hold the boats, keep the time, and manage the sport.... You get the picture...they do a lot to make sure dragon boating is fun and enjoyable to all participants.

However, have you ever noticed how it seems to be the same person time after time volunteering to do the work? It is not long before these people are burnt out and walk away.

As the leader of a club or a sport, it is imperative that you regularly recognise and reward the efforts of the people who give so much to the sport.

In this module, you will find ways to reward your volunteers and ideas on how effectively manage them so they come back for more!

Volunteer Management

Types of volunteer roles in dragon boating:

Organisational level - Policy/management

- Board or committee member
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- President /Chairperson
- Club patron
- Vice-president

Operational

- Official, Umpire, Referee
- Coach
- Equipment Manager
- Team Manager
- Bus Driver
- Building and Grounds Coordinator
- Function organiser
- Competition organisation

Once you have appointed a volunteer, it is good idea to provide a guidebook or kit with as much information about the club as possible.

Retaining volunteers

If you want your volunteers to stay with your club, it is important to develop a sense of club commitment amongst them.

As with any organisation, a high turnover of people can damage and undermine the hard work put in.

Volunteer turnover is expected; being part of a club can be draining, but if you have some procedures in place to assist in retention, you are off to a good start.

When a new volunteer starts, have in place an Orientation package. This package should include all information relevant to the role, responsibilities, the club, rewards and recognitions, policies and procedures.

If a person knows what to expect and what is expected of them, they are more likely to be happy and give the role 100%.

Steps to retaining volunteers

1. *Training and development (formal and informal)*

- Training providers
- Dragon Boat Queensland and AusDBF
- National, state and regional sport and recreation organisations
- Local authorities
- State departments of sport and recreation (including regional offices)
- Local TAFE colleges and university campuses
- Private colleges
- Australian Coaching Council (ACC)
- Australian Society of Sport Administrators (ASSA)
- Sports Medicine Australia (SMA)
- YMCA/YWCA
- Regional arts councils
- Youth organisations
- State volunteer centers

2. *Establishment of volunteer's rights and responsibilities*

3. *Recognition and reward*

- Be immediate—recognise volunteer effort soon after it is given.
- Be specific—give personal recognition.
- Be consistent—recognise everyone's achievements; avoid showing favouritism.
- Be sincere—mean what you say.
- Be enthusiastic—being positive and upbeat will build enthusiasm in others.
- Ideas for recognizing and rewarding
- Smiling, saying hello and thank you.
- Sending welcome letters 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 newsletters.
- Presenting volunteer awards at the annual general meeting.
- Giving complimentary tickets to special events and functions.
- Sending get well, birthday and Christmas cards.
- Arranging discounts at recreation and sport 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 free or discounted use of facilities.
- Listening to volunteers' ideas.
- Funding training courses, conferences, and seminars.
- Presenting awards for 1, 3, 5, 10, 15 and more years of service.

4. *Succession planning - most volunteers exit at the AGM.*

- Have procedures in place for handover of roles. This is where good administration policies come to play. Have a manual ready to give to the person taking on the job so all the information is at their finger tips.

Volunteer info

Being an effective leader of your club will help you to manage and retain volunteers. A good leader inspires, encourages enthusiasm and commitment, and develops positive attitudes amongst participants.

Points for volunteer management:

- *Conflict management* - when you gather groups of humans together, there will inevitable be conflict. Conflict can be good and depends on how it is managed. The best way to managed conflict is **compromise** - a solution to conflict in which each party gives up something of value and **collaboration** - resolving conflict by seeking a solution advantageous to all parties.
- *Stress management* - being a volunteer can be stressful. Quite often, the same people volunteer to do the many jobs required to keep a club running. It is important to identify areas where stress may become a problem - this can be done during a Risk Management Action Plan.
- *Difficult Volunteers* - sometimes the need to retain a volunteer can be outweighed by one that is difficult, or underperforming. Dealing with difficult people can be stressful and uncomfortable, but it is important have a plan in place to discipline or deal with difficult volunteers. This is covered in the Policy and Procedure Manual.

Volunteer Event Management

Here are the steps to hosting a successful regatta (see Regatta Hosting module) with your volunteers.

- Decide what positions require filling and how many you will need
- Provide job descriptions so people know what is expected of them
- Prepare a volunteer roster so no one is left doing one job all day without a break
- Provide food and drink for the volunteers
- Orientation and training: attendance requirements and expectations clearly spelled out
- Provision of uniforms
- Attendance and volunteer rosters: methods of rostering volunteers; hours to be 'worked'; recording attendance (sign-in and sign-out) particularly in relation to liability for injuries or accidents; a statement about organising substitute volunteers should also be included
- Out-of-pocket expenses: a statement about the reimbursement of expenses incurred during an event and the types of out-of-pocket expenses that are covered/not covered
- Car parking/transport: provided or not provided on-site or near-site; use of private vehicles for official event business; if parking is not available, who provides/pays for alternative forms of transport for volunteers
- Accreditation: requirement for volunteers who have first aid or other certification to have original copies cited and/or photocopied
- Workplace health and safety: statements in relation to relevant legislation and guidelines for providing a safe working (volunteering) environment
- Liability and negligence: for accidents, injuries and/or property damage

- Insurance: extent to which event volunteers are covered in the case of injury, accident or death to the volunteer or caused by the volunteer
- Complaints and grievances
- Recognition of volunteers

Volunteer Management Policies

It is good idea to develop a Volunteer Management Policy to be included in the Policy and Procedure Manual. Policies provide guidance to ensure the club's activities are coordinated and conducted in ways that are fair, impartial, and consistent. Policies assist in this process and clarify the values and beliefs that are considered important by the organisation.

A club's policies indicated the rules, boundaries, and expectations of behavioural standards to members and other stakeholders. Establishment of policies for volunteer management (and for overall club management):

- Ensure continuity
- Fairness and equity
- Clarify values and beliefs
- Communicate expectations
- Specify standards and state rules
- Improve risk management and Reduce liability
- Policy areas to consider for volunteers:
- Who is eligible?
- Rights and responsibilities
- Out-of-pocket expenses
- Record keeping, training and accreditation
- Conflict of interest
- Absences and dismissing volunteers