

A close-up photograph of the back of an orange t-shirt. A black rectangular patch is affixed to the fabric, featuring the word "VOLUNTEER" in bold, orange, uppercase letters.

VOLUNTEER

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT



A close-up photograph of a green grassy field. In the foreground, there is a distinct white line of grass, possibly a boundary or a specific type of grass. The rest of the field is a vibrant green. A dark grey rectangular box is overlaid on the upper portion of the image, containing white text.

Remember that just as rugby is a team sport on the pitch it is also a team sport off the pitch.

Volunteers

Volunteers are the lifeblood and backbone of every sport and rugby is no different. Many hours of time, energy, and enthusiasm are dedicated in a variety of ways. Without the work that these dedicated individuals carry out many of our clubs would cease to exist.

How do we identify what you need?

Before you go out asking people to help it is important that you examine your current club structure and if necessary update it. You must look and see how you would like the club to develop. This will enable you to identify more clearly the roles that you need people to fill.

The old adage of many hands make light work is very true when it comes to all aspects of running your local rugby club.

It is important that you clearly define each role and actually write accurate role descriptions. The last thing you need is to recruit someone into a role and then find out later that it is not what they thought they were going to be doing and for them to leave. Once you have identified what is required you need to address a number of key issues.

Which roles that are currently carried out need to be divided into smaller more manageable roles? Remember Volunteers are unlikely to undertake a role that is so encompassing that it takes up all their time.

Which role(s) are not carried out by anyone?

- Which roles that are currently carried out need to be divided into smaller more manageable roles?
- Remember Volunteers are unlikely to undertake a role that is so encompassing that it takes up all their time.
- Which role(s) are not carried out by anyone?
- Does any one person carry out more than one role?
- Look at how you want the club to evolve and develop. Are there any new roles that need to be created? Write brief job descriptions for these roles.

Once you have completed these tasks you should have a club structure defined by roles that clearly define what is involved in each specific role.

Valuing the volunteers time

It is recognised and accepted that today's volunteers have personal and work commitments, which in many cases does not leave as much time for volunteering as in the past. It is essential therefore to accommodate, plan, and fit into the club structure whatever valuable time volunteers are happy to give in support of their club. In many cases volunteers who willingly take on a role in the club, are generally assured that the club will provide all the necessary backup support, which unfortunately with the best of intentions, rarely happens.

Volunteers will quickly lose motivation if their time isn't spent wisely and their role or function is totally different to what was envisaged. A few useful points to keep in mind are as follows:

- Does your club have a Development/Action plan?
- Do the volunteers know what it is and agree with it?
- Make sure that meetings are well managed. Have a set agenda and stick to it, including the start and expected finish times.
- Review your volunteer programme; ask how it could be improved?

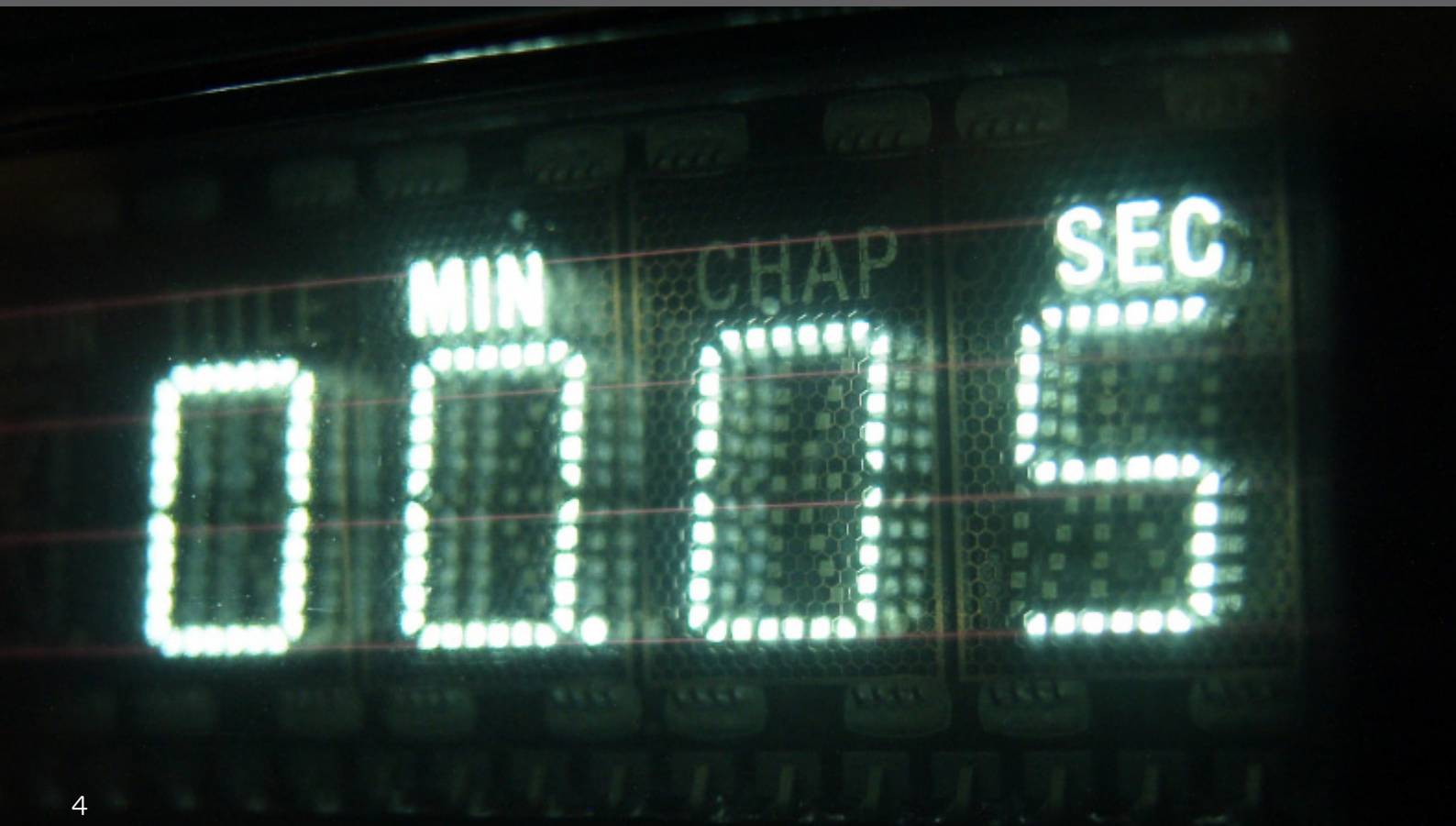
Motivating volunteers

Why do people volunteer?

- Because they were asked.
- Because they, their friends or family are involved with rugby.
- To meet new people or develop new social networks.

What motivates the volunteers?

- **Making a Difference:** Feeling that they are making a worthwhile contribution to the club, school and community.
- **Recognition:** Feeling valued and appreciated for the work that you are doing.
- **Communication:** Knowing and understanding the difference that your contribution makes.
- **Social:** Enjoying being with people working as a team and feeling a sense of belonging.



Recruitment of volunteers

The appointment of a Club Volunteer Coordinator must now be regarded as an essential position in all clubs. The awareness of the need to actively attract people to volunteer in your club is vital. Remember your club faces competition for volunteer's limited time from the vast range of alternative leisure activities available, as well as other demands on their personal time. There are a number of different methods that can be of help when attracting volunteers into your club.

- Using people who are currently volunteering within your club to recruit new volunteers from among their own contacts. This requires everybody in your club to accept individual responsibility for recruiting volunteers.
- By spreading the word as widely as possible on the assumption that the more people get to hear about the opportunities your club offers the more who will respond.
- By targeting your recruitment at certain people using your role descriptions to be quite specific about what you are looking for.
- Checking past and present membership lists.
- Producing posters, highlighting the value of volunteering.
- Advertising on club website, using email shots or club Ezines.

Retention of volunteers

Retaining volunteers is as important as recruiting them in the first place. Volunteers want to feel welcomed, appreciated, needed, useful, and part of the team in the club. It is therefore crucial that you do all in your power to ensure that your volunteers feel valued and appreciated. There are 3 key areas that should be focussed on to appreciate and support your volunteers:

1.) Recognise

Make a club policy that all teams have a way to thank team officials:

All clubs should have policy and procedures in place to ensure all teams thank their team officials. Club volunteers should be prioritised when it comes to allocating match tickets.

“Volunteer of Year” award as part of club prize giving:

A “Volunteer of the Year” award should be included as part of the club's prize giving. This award can go to any administration or team official. The winner should be the clubs nomination to the Provincial Branch's awards.

Thank you letter from Club Chairman/Captain to all volunteers and team officials in the club:

Letter from club Chairman/Captain to all volunteers and club administrators thanking them for their contribution.

All volunteers invited to a club thank you night. Possibly on a sponsors' thank you night:

Clubs should hold a “function” of some form to thank their volunteer base. This thank you could be incorporated into a sponsors thank you function.

2.) Resource

Team officials included in any clothing sponsorship:

Where possible clubs should endeavour to obtain clothing sponsorship that also covers team officials and the volunteer base of the club.

Organisations have a stated policy as to reimbursement of personal expenses incurred by volunteers on behalf of the organisation:

Team officials and volunteers should not be “out of pocket” for items of spending incurred on club business. A policy and procedures for expense reimbursement should be formulated.

Training and up - skilling promoted:

Clubs should actively promote and provide opportunities for up-skilling and training for coaches.

Training equipment readily provided:

Clubs should have, readily accessible and in good working condition, all the necessary equipment for training

3.) Respect

Ease the administration load for team officials:

Clubs should ensure that policies and procedures are in place that makes the administrative load on volunteers as easy as possible.

Workload is divided into small lots. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and documented:

Clubs and schools should have clearly defined roles and responsibilities for volunteers. These should be documented for the volunteers to know what is expected from them. A small volume of work for many is better than large volumes for a few.

“Volunteer succession” plan in place:

The club should develop a volunteer succession plan so that no volunteers feel that they are forced to keep the role for life. Such planning helps ensure new blood flows in.

All potential candidates are nominated for Branch or National awards:

The club should ensure that all nominations that a volunteer or team official might be eligible for, are made in a timely and well documented fashion.

Ensure a formal plan is in place

Volunteers need to know who to turn to for help and support. This should be formalised by clubs by producing a policy with procedures for Volunteer Management.





Remember everyone should be aware that they can be involved in running the club and remember new faces bring new ideas.



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